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# ROLAND CASHEL

BY

CHARLES LEVER

AUTHOR OF "CHARLES O'MALLEY"

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

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# PREFACE.

I FIRST thought of this story—I should say I planned it, if the expression were not misleading—when living at the Lake of Como. There, in a lovely little villa—the "Cima"—on the border of the lake, with that glorious blending of Alpine scenery and garden-like luxuriance around me, and little or none of interruption or intercourse, I had abundant time to make acquaintance with my characters and follow them into innumerable situations, and through adventures far more extraordinary and exciting than I dared afterwards to recount.

I do not know how it may be with other story-tellers, but I have to own for myself that the personages of a novel gain over at times a degree of interest very little inferior to that inspired by real and living people, and that this is especially the case when I have found myself in some secluded spot and seeing little of the world. To such an ascendancy has this deception attained that more than once I have found myself trying to explain why this person should have done that, and by what impulse that other was led into something else. In fact, I have found that there are conditions of the mind in which purely imaginary creations assume the characters of actual people, and act positively as though they were independent of the will that invented them.

"Roland Cashel."

Of the strange manner in which imagination can thus assume the mastery, and for a while at least have command over the mind, I cannot give a stronger instance within my own experience than the mode in which this story was first conceived.

When I began I intended that the action should be carried on in the land where the tale opened. The scene on every side of me had shed its influence, the air was weighty with the perfume of the lime and the orange. To days of dazzling brilliancy there succeeded nights of tropical splendour; with stars of almost preternatural magnitude streaking the calm lake with long lines of light. To people a scene like this with the sort of characters that might befit it, was rather a matter of necessity with me than choice, and it was then that Maritaña revealed herself to me with a charm of loveliness I have never been able to repicture. It was there I bethought me of those passionate natures in which climate, and soil, and vegetation reproduce themselves, glowing, ardent, and voluptuous as they are. It was there my fancy loved to stray among the changeful incidents of lives of wild adventure and wilder passion; and to imagine the strange discords that could be evoked between the traits of a land that recalled Paradise and the natures that were only an relic in the fall.

I cannot trust to my memory to remind me of the sort of tale I meaned to write. I know there was to have been a perfect avalanche of adventure on land and on sea. I know that through a stormy period of daily peril and excitement, the traits of the Northern temperament in Roland himself were to have asserted their superiority over his more impulsive comrades; I know he was to have won that girl's love against a rivalry that set life in the issue; and I have a vague impression of how such a character might come by action and experience to develop such traits as make men the rulers of their fellows.

Several of the situations occur to me, but not a single clue to the story. There are even now scenes before

me of prairie life and lonely rides in passes of the Pampas; of homes where the civilized man had never seen a brother nor heard a native tongue. It is in vain I endeavour to recall anything like a connected narrative. All that I can well remember is the great hold the characters had taken in my mind; how they peopled the landscape around me, and followed me wherever I went.

This was in autumn. As winter drew nigh we moved into an Italian city, much frequented by foreigners, and especially the resort of our countrymen. The new life of this place and the interest they excited, so totally unlike all that I had left at my little villa, effected a complete revolution in my thoughts, utterly routing the belief I had indulged in as to the characters of my story, and the incidents in which they displayed themselves. Up to this all my efforts had been, as it were, to refresh my mind as to a variety of events and people I had once known, and to try if I could not recall certain situations which had interested me. Now the spell was broken, all the charm of the illusion gone, and I awoke to the dreary consciousness of my creatures being mere shadows, and their actions as unreal as themselves.

There is a sort of intellectual bankruptcy in such awakenings; and I know of few things so discouraging as this sudden revulsion from dream-land to the cold *terra firma* of unadorned fact.

There was little in the city we now lived in to harmonise with "romance." It was, in fact, all that realism could accomplish with the aids of every taste and passion of modern society. That this life of present day dissipation should be enacted in scenes where every palace, and every street, every monument and, indeed, every name recalled a glorious past, may not impossibly have heightened the enjoyment of the drama, but most unquestionably it vulgarized the actors.

Instead of the Orinoco and its lands of feathery palms, I had now before me the Arno and its gay crowds of loungers, the endless tide of equipages, and

the strong pulse-beat of an existence that even, in the highways of life, denotes passion and emotion.

What I had of a plan was lost to me from that hour. I was again in the whirlpool of active existence, and the world around me was deep—triple deep—in all cases of loving and hating, and plotting and gambling, of intriguing, countermining and betraying, as very polite people would know how to do: occupations to watch, which inspire an intensity of interest unknown in any other condition of existence.

Out of the impressions thus enforced came all the characters of my story. Not one was a portrait, though in each and all were traits taken from life. If I suffered myself on one single occasion to amass too many of the characteristics of an individual into a sketch, it was in the picture of the beau of Drumcondera; but there I was drawing from recollection and not able to correct, as I should otherwise have done, what might seem too close adherence to a model. I have been told that in the character of Linton I have exaggerated wickedness beyond all belief. I am sorry to reply that I made but a faint copy of him who suggested that personage, and who lives and walks the stage of life as I write. One or two persons—not more—who know him whose traits furnished the picture, are well aware that I have neither overdrawn my sketch, nor exaggerated my drawing.

The Kennyfeck young ladies—I am anxious to say—are not from life, nor is Lady Kilgoff, though I have heard surmises to the contrary.

These are all the explanations and excuses that occur to me I have to make of this story. Its graver faults are not within the pale of apology; and for these I only ask indulgence, the same indulgence that has never been denied me.

CHARLES LEVER.

TRIESTE, 1872.

# ROLAND CASHEL.

## CHAPTER I.

### DON PEDRO'S GUESTS.

And thus they lived ye merrie yeare,
For they were a jollie crewe
Of pleasante laddes that knewe no feare,
And—as little of honestie too.
BALLADE OF CAPT. PIKE.

Our tale opens on a gorgeous night of Midsummer—at an era so little remote, that to name the precise year could have no interest for the reader, and in a region which seemed to combine all that is delightful in climate with whatever is luxuriant and splendid in vegetation. It was upon the bank of a small river, a tributary of the Oronoco, not very distant from the picturesque city of Barcelonetta, that a beautiful villa stood, the elegance of whose architecture, and the lavish magnificence of whose decorations, were alike evidence that neither taste nor wealth were wanting to its proprietor.

In this land where Nature had been so prodigal of her gifts, the luxurious appointments of this princely abode seemed to partake of the character of a fairy palace; and the admixture of objects of high art, the treasures of Italian galleries and Spanish collections, with the more vivid realities of the scene, favoured this illusion. The fortunate owner of this paradise was a certain Pedro Rica, who, for something like fourteen years, had been a resident of Columbia. A widower, with an only child, then an infant of scarce a year old, he had arrived in that country seeking, as he said, by new scenes, and new associations, to erase, so far as might be, the painful memory of his late bereavement.

While he gave it to be understood that he was a Spaniard by birth, some averred that he was a Mexican; others, that he was a Texan; and one or two alleged that he was an American of the States, an assumption that the ease and fluency of his English went far to corroborate. Of whatever na-

tion he came, certain it is that a mystery hung over both his native land and his history; and as he showed little disposition to enlighten the world on these subjects, as is usual in such cases, his neighbours took their revenge by inventing a hundred stories about him, each one only worse than the other. At one time it was said that his wealth was acquired by piracy; at another, that he absconded from a Texan city, with a large sum belonging to the government; forgery—breach of trust, were among the commonest allegations; and the most charitable only averred that he made his money in the slave-trade.

It is but fair to say, that the sole foundation for these various rumours lay in the stern distance of his manner, and the cold, almost repulsive, austerity with which he declined all acquaintance with the neighbourhood. These traits, added to the voluptuous splendour of a retinue and a style of living infinitely above all around, gradually estranged from him the few who attempted to form an intimacy, and left him to live—as it seemed he preferred—a life of solitary magnificence; an object of affected pity to many, but of real envy to all.

As his daughter grew up, he was accustomed to visit the sea-coast each summer for some weeks, and from these absences he, now, usually returned with one or two acquaintances, for the most part officers of the Columbian navy, with whom he had formed an intimacy at the sea-side. Such acquaintanceship seemed to increase from year to year, till at last each autumn saw the "Villa de las Noches Entretenidas," "of the pleasant nights," crowded with guests, whose wild orgies were in strange contrast to the former stillness and quietude within those walls.

A more motley and discordant assemblage it would be hard to conceive, consisting as they did of adventurers from every land of Europe. The wild and reckless outcast of every clime and country, the beggared speculator, the ruined gambler, the duellist with blood upon his hand, the defaulter with shame upon his forehead. All that good morals reject, and the law pursues, mingled with others whose faults went no further than waste or improvidence, or the mere venial sin, that they came poor into the world, and were stamped "Adventurers" from the cradle.

A service that never exercised too nice a scrutiny into the habits of its followers, and whose buccaneer life had all the freedom of piracy, with the assumption of a recognised class, offered no mean attraction to the lover of enterprise; and certainly, if the standard of morals was low, that of daring, reckless adventure, was the very opposite.

Amid this pleasant company, we must now ask pardon for introducing our reader, with this saving assurance, that he shall not have long to commune with such companionship. It was, as we have said, a summer's night,

A sky, all glittering with stars, spread its dark blue canopy over a scene where, amid the banana, the manioc, and the plantain, flowers of every bright hue were blooming, and fountains gushing; while, through an atmosphere, tremulous with the song of the mocking-bird, fire-flies were glancing and glittering.

In the deep piazza before the Villa was now assembled a numerous party of men disposed in every attitude of lounging, ease, and abandonment, they seemed, though perhaps after very different estimates, to be enjoying the delicious balm and freshness of the night air. They were of various ages; and although the greater number showed by their dress that they belonged to the naval service, other signs, not less distinctive, pronounced that they were drawn from classes of life as varied as they were numerous; while, here and there, a Caballero might be seen attired in the picturesque costume of the Caraccas, his many-coloured scarf and plumed hat aiding, in no inconsiderable degree, the picturesque effect of a scene Salvator might have painted.

Not only beneath the piazza itself, but on the marble steps, and even beneath them again, on the close-shaven turf, the party lay, sated as it were with splendour, and recruiting strength for new dissipations. Some sat talking in low and whispering voices, as if unwilling, even by a sound, to break the stilly calm. Others, in perfect silence, seemed to drink in the soothing influence of that tranquil moment, or smoked the cigarettos in dreamy indolence; while at intervals, from the leafy groves, a merry laugh, or the tinkling of a guitar, would mingle with the bubbling murmur of the fountains, making the very stillness yet more still as they ceased. Behind the piazza, and opening by several large windows upon it, could be seen a splendid saloon, resplendent with wax-lights, and still displaying on the loaded table the remnants of a sumptuous repast, amid which vessels of gold and vases of flowers appeared. Here, yet lingered two or three guests—spirits who set no store on an entertainment if it did not degenerate into debauch.

A broad alley, flanked by tall hedges of the prickly pear, led from the Villa to a little mound, on which a chesnut-tree stood, the patriarch of the wood; a splendid tree it was, and worthy of a better destiny than it now fulfilled, as, lighted up by several lanterns suspended from the branches, spread its shade over a large table where a party were playing at "Monte."

Even without the suggestive aid of the large heaps of gold beside each player, and piled in the middle of the table, the grave and steadfast faces of some, the excited look of others, and the painful intensity of interest in all, showed that the play was high. Still, although such was the case, and while the players were men whose hot blood and reckless lives did but little

dispose them to put the curb upon their tempers, not a word was spoken aloud; nor did a gesture or a look betray the terrible vacillations of hope and fear the changeful fortune of the game engendered. Standing near the table, but not mingling in the play, stood Don Pedro himself, his sallow and melancholy features fixed upon the game, with an expression that might mean sorrow or deep anxiety, it were difficult to say which. Beside him, at a small table littered with papers and writing materials, sat his steward, or intendant, a German named Geizheimer, a beetle-browed, white-cheeked, thick-lipped fellow, whose aquiline features and guttural accents told that lending money at enormous interest was no uncongenial occupation. Such was his present, and indeed almost his only duty; for, while Don Pedro seldom or never played, gaming was the invariable occupation of the guests, whose means to support it were freely supplied by the steward; the borrowers either passing a simple note for repayment, or, when the sum was a heavy one, mortgaging their share in the next prize they should capture. Other contracts, it was rumoured, were occasionally resorted to, but of such we shall speak anon.

At a short distance from the table, but sufficiently near to observe the game, stood one on whom nothing short of the passion of play could have prevented every eye being bent. But so it was: one stood alone and unmarked, while all the interest was concentrated upon the game. Dressed in a white tunic or chemise, fastened round the waist by a gold girdle, stood Maritaña Rica, her large and lustrous black eyes eagerly turned to where two youths were standing intensely occupied by the play. Her neck, arms, and shoulders were bare, in Mexican fashion, and even the mantilla she wore over her head was less as a protection than as a necessary accompaniment of a costume, which certainly is of the simplest kind. Except the chemise, she had no other garment, save a jupe of thin lama-wool, beautifully embroidered and studded with precious stones; this terminated below the middle of the leg, displaying an ankle and foot no Grecian statue ever surpassed in beauty.

If the deep brown of her skin almost conveyed the reproach—and such it is—of Indian blood, a passing glance at the delicate outline of her features, and, in particular, of her mouth, at once contradicted the suspicion. The lips were beautifully arched, and, although plump and rounded, had none of the fulness of the degraded race. These were now slightly parted, displaying teeth of surprising whiteness, and imparting to the whole expression a character of speaking animation. Although not yet sixteen, her figure had all the graceful development of womanhood, without having entirely lost a certain air of fawn-like elasticity, which, from time to time, her gestures of impatience displayed.

The two young men, on whom her interest seemed fixed, were playing in partnership, and, in their highly-wrought passion, never once looked up from the board. One, somewhat taller and older by a few years, appeared to exercise the guidance of their play; and it was easy to see, in the swollen and knotted veins of his forehead, in the clenched hands, and in the tremulous lip, the passionate nature of a confirmed gambler. The younger, whose dress of green velvet, slashed and braided in Mexican taste, and whose wide-leaved sombrero was decorated with a long sash of light blue silk, whose deep gold fringe hung upon his shoulder, was evidently one less enamoured of play, and more than once busied himself in arranging the details of his costume, of which he seemed somewhat vain. It was in one of these moments that his eyes met those of Maritaña fixed steadfastly upon him, and, fascinated by her unmoved stare, he felt his cheek grow hot, and, whether from a sense of shame or a still more tender motive, the blush spread over his face and forehead. Maritaña looked steadily, almost sternly, at him, and then, with a slight toss of her head, so slight that none save he who had watched her intently could read its scornful import, she turned away. The youth did not wait a moment, but, slipping from his place, followed along the alley he had seen her take.

He who remained, unconscious of his friend's departure, continued to mutter about the chances of the game, and speculate on the amount he would dare to hazard. "She is against us every time, Roland!" said he, in a low, half-whispering voice. "Fortune will not smile, woo her how we may! Speak, amigo mio, shall we risk all?" As he spoke, he began counting the piles of glittering gold before him, but his hand trembled, and the pieces clung to his moist fingers, so that he was too late for the deal.

"Sixteen hundred," muttered he to himself. "Ten—twenty—thirty."

"The bank loses!" cried the croupier, announcing the game.

"Loses!" screamed the young man, in an accent whose piercing agony startled the whole board—"loses! because it was the only time I had no wager. See, Roland, see how true it is; there is a curse upon us." He seized the arm of the person at his side, and clenched it with a convulsive energy as he spoke.

"Saperlote! my young friend; you'll never change luck by tearing my old uniform," growled out a rugged-looking German skipper, who, commanding a small privateer, affected the rank and style of a naval officer.

"Oh, is it you, Hans?" said the youth, carelessly; "I thought it had been one of our own fellows. Only think the bank should lose, because I made no stake; see now, watch this. Halt!" cried he to the dealer, in a voice that at once arrested his hand. "You give one no time, Sir, to decide upon his game," said he, with a savage irascibility, which continued but

luck had carried to the highest pitch. "Players who risk their two or three crowns may not object; but, if a man desires to make a heavy stake, it is but common courtesy to wait a moment. A thousand doubloons, the red queen—fifteen hundred," added he, quickly, "fifteen, and thirty-five—or eight." So saying, he pushed with both hands the great heap of gold pieces into the middle of the table; and then, with eyes bloodshot and glaring, he watched each card that fell from the banker's fingers. When the first row of cards were dealt, all was in his favour, and, as the banker took up the second pack, a long suppressed sigh broke from the gambler's bosom. It seemed, at length, as if fortune had grown weary of persecuting him.

"Come, Enrique," said a handsomely-dressed and fine-looking man, who stood opposite to him, "luck has turned at last, there is nothing but the queen of spades against you!"

As if by some magic spell he had called the card, the words were not out when it dropped upon the table. A cry of mingled amazement and horror burst from the players, whose natures would seem to recognise some superstitious influence in such marked casualties. As for Enrique, he stood perfectly still and silent; a horrible smile, the ghastly evidence of an hysterical effort, sat upon his rigid features, and at length two or three heavy drops of blood trickled from his nostril, and fell upon his shirt.

"Where's Roland?" said he, in a faint whisper, to a young man behind him.

"I saw him with Maritaña, walking towards the three fountains."

Enrique's pallid cheek grew scarlet, and rudely pushing his way through the crowd, he disappeared from view.

"There goes a man in a good humour to board a prize," said one of the bystanders, coolly, and the play proceeded without a moment's interruption.

With his broad-leaved hat drawn down upon his brows, and his head sunk upon his bosom, he traversed the winding walks with the step of one who knew their every turning; at last he reached a lonely and unfrequented part of the garden, where the path, leading for some distance along the margin of a small lake, suddenly turned off towards a flower terrace, in the midst of which "the three fountains" stood.

Instead of taking the shortest way to the spot, Enrique left the walk and entered a grove of trees, through whose thick shade he proceeded silently and cautiously. The air was calm and motionless, and none save one who had received the education of a prairie hunter, could have followed that track so noiselessly. By degrees the wood became open, and his progress more circumspect, when he suddenly halted.

Directly in front of him, not twenty paces from where he stood, was the terrace, over which, in the stilly night air, the fountain threw a light spray-like shower, rustling, as it fell upon the leaves, with a murmuring sound Lower down, was a little basin surrounded by a border of white marble, and beside this two figures were now standing, whom, by the clear starlight, he could easily recognise to be Roland and Maritaña.

The former, with folded arms, and head bent down, as if in thought, leaned against a tree, while Maritaña stood beside the fountain, moving her foot to and fro in the clear water, and, as though entirely engrossed by her childish pastime, never bestowed a look upon her companion. At last, she ceased suddenly, and turning abruptly round, so as to stand full in front of him, said, "Well, Senhor, am I to hope our pleasant interview is ended, or have I still to hear more of your complaints, those gentle remonstrances that sound, to my ears at least, more wearisome than words of downright anger?"

"You have not heard me patiently," said the youth, advancing towards her, while the slightly shaken tones of his voice contrasted strangely with the assured and haughty accents in which he spoke.

"Patiently!" echoed she, with a scornful laugh. "And where was this same goodly gift to be learned? Among the pleasant company we have quitted, Senhor? whose friendships of a night are celebrated by a brawl on the morrow! From the most exemplary crew of the *Esmeralda*, and, in particular, the worthy lieutenant, Don Roland da Castel, who, if report speaks truly, husbands the virtue so rigidly that he cannot spare the smallest portion to expend upon his friends?"

"If my thrift had extended to other matters," said the youth, bitterly, "mayhap I should not have to listen to language like this?"

"What say you, Sir?" cried the girl, passionately, as she stamped upon the ground with a gesture of violent anger. "Do you affect to say, that it matters to me whether you stood there as loaded with gold as on the morning you brought back that Mexican prize, and played the hero with such martial modesty; or as poor—as poor—as bad luck at cards can make you? If I loved you, I'd have as little care for one event as the other!"

"You certainly thought more favourably of me then, than now, Maritaña!" said Roland, diffidently.

"I know not why you say so!"

"At least you accepted my hand in betrothal——"

"Stay!" cried she, impetuously. "Did I not tell you, then, before the assembled witnesses—before my father—what a mockery this same ceremony was—that its whole aim and object was to take advantage of that

disgraceful law that can make an unmarried girl, a widow, to inherit the fortune of one she never would have accepted as her husband. Speak, Sir!—and say, did I not tell you this, and more too, that such a bridal ceremony brought little fortune to the bridegroom, for that already I had been thrice a widowed bride? Nay, more, you heard me swear as solemnly, that while I regarded the act as one of deep profanation, I felt in no wise bound by it. It is idle, then, to speak of our betrothal!"

"It is true, Maritaña, you said all this; although, perhaps, you had not now remembered it, had not some other succeeded to that place in your regard——"

"There, there!" cried she, stopping him impatiently. "I will not listen again to the bead-roll of your jealousies. People must have loved very little, or too much, to endure that kind of torture. Besides, why tell me of these things? You are, they say, a most accomplished hunter, and can answer me,—if, when in chase of an antelope, a jaguar joins the sport, you do not turn upon him at once, the worthier and nobler enemy, and thus, as it were, protect what had been your prey."

The youth seemed stung to the quick by this pitiless sarcasm; and, although he made no reply, his hands, convulsively clutched, bespoke the torrent of agitation within him. "You are right, Maritaña!" said he, after a pause. "It is idle to talk of our betrothal—I release you."

"Release *me!*" said she, laughing contemptuously; "this is a task I always perform for myself, Senhor, and by the shortest of methods, as thus." As she spoke, she struggled to tear from her finger a ring, which resisted all her efforts; at last, by a violent wrench, she succeeded, and holding it up for a second, till the large diamond glittered like a star, she threw it into the still fountain at her feet. "There, amigo mio, I release *you*—never was freedom more willingly accorded!"

"Never was there a slave more weary of his servitude!" said the youth, bitterly. "If Don Pedro Rica but tear his accursed bond, I should feel myself my own again."

"He will scarce refuse you, Sir, if the rumour be correct that says you have lost eleven thousand doubloons at play. The wealthy conqueror stands on very different ground from the ruined gambler. Go to him at once! Ask back the paper! Tell him you have neither a heart nor a fortune to bestow upon his daughter! That, as a gambler, fettered by the lust for play, you have lost all soul for those hazardous enterprises that win a girl's love, and a father's consent."

She waited for a moment, that he might reply; and then, impatient, perhaps, at his silence, added—"I did not think, Senhor, you esteemed yourself so

rich a prize! Be of good cheer, however! They who are less cognizant of your deserts will be more eager to secure them."

With these slighting words she turned away. Roland advanced as if to follow her, but with a contemptuous gesture of the hand she waved him back, and he stood like one spell-bound, gazing after her, till she disappeared in the dark distance.

## CHAPTER II.

### A CHALLENGE—AND HOW IT ENDED.

"La Diche viene quando no se aguarda."—SPANISH PROVERB.

(Good luck comes when it is not looked for.)

ROLAND looked for some minutes in the direction by which Maritaña had gone, and then, with a sudden start, as if of some newly taken resolve, took the path towards the Villa. He had not gone far when, at the turn of the way, he came in front of Enrique, who, with hasty steps, was advancing towards him.

"Lost, everything lost!" exclaimed the latter, with a mournful gesture of his hands.

"All gone!" cried Roland.

"Every crown in the world!"

"Be it so; there is an end of gambling, at least!"

"You bear your losses nobly, Senhor!" said Enrique, sneeringly; "and, before a fitting audience, might claim the merit of an accomplished gamester. I am, however, most unworthy to witness such fine philosophy. I recognise in beggary nothing but disgrace!"

"Bear it, then, and the whole load, too!" said Roland, sneeringly. "To your solicitations only I yielded in taking my place at that accursed table. I had neither a passion for play, nor the lust for money-getting; you thought to teach me both, and, peradventure, you have made me despise them more than ever."

"What a moralist!" cried Enrique, laughing insolently, "who discovers that he has cared neither for his mistress nor his money till he has lost both."

"What do you mean?" said Roland, trembling with passion.

"I never speak in riddles," was the cool reply.

"This, then, is meant as insult," said Roland, approaching closer, and speaking in a still lower voice; "or is it merely the passion of a disappointed gambler?"

"And if it were, amigo mio," retorted the other, "what more fitting stake to set against the anger of a rejected lover?"

"Be it so!" cried Roland, fiercely; "you never caught up a man more disposed to indulge your humour. Shall it be now?"

"Could not so much courage keep warm till daylight?" said Enrique, calmly. "Below the fountains there is a very quiet spot."

"At sunrise?"

"At sunrise," echoed Enrique, bowing with affected courtesy, till the streamers from his hat touched the ground.

"Now for my worthy father-in-law elect," said Roland; "and to see him before he may hear of this business, or I may find it difficult to obtain my divorce." When the youth arrived at the Villa, the party were assembled at supper. The great saloon, crowded with guests and hurrying menials, was a scene of joyous but reckless conviviality, the loud laughter and the louder voices of the company striking on Roland's ear with a grating discordance he had never experienced before. The sounds of that festivity he had been wont to recognise, as the pleasant evidence of free and high-souled enjoyment, now jarred heavily on his senses, and he wondered within himself how long he had lived in such companionship.

Well knowing that the supper party would not remain long at table, while high play continued to have its hold upon the guests, he strolled into one of the shady alleys, watching from time to time for the breaking up of the entertainment. At last some two or three arose, and preceded by servants with lighted flambeaux, took the way towards the gaming-table. They were speedily followed by others, so that in a brief space—except by the usual group of hard-drinking souls, who ventured upon no stake save that of health—the room was deserted.

He looked eagerly for Don Pedro, but could not see him, as it was occasionally his practice to retire to his library, long before his guests sought their repose. Roland made a circuit of the Villa, and soon came to the door of this apartment, which led into a small flower-garden. Tapping gently here, he received a summons to enter, and found himself before Don Pedro, who, seated before a table, appeared deeply immersed in matters of business.

Roland did not need the cold and almost stern reception of his host to make him feel his intrusion very painfully; and he hastened to express his extreme regret that he should be compelled by any circumstances to tres-

pass on leisure so evidently destined for privacy. "But a few moments patient hearing," continued he, "will show that to me at least the object of this visit did not admit of delay."

"Be seated, Senhor; and, if I may ask it without incivility, be brief, for I have weighty matters before me."

"I will endeavour to be so," said Roland, civilly, and resumed: "This evening, Don Pedro, has seen the last of twenty-eight thousand Spanish dollars, which, five weeks since, I carried here along with me. They were my share, as commander of the *Esmeralda*, when she captured a Mexican bark in May last. They were won with hard blows and some danger—they were squandered in disgrace at the gaming-table."

"Forgive me," said Don Pedro, "you can scarcely adhere to your pledge of brevity if you permit yourself to be led away by moralising; just say how this event concerns me, and wherefore the present visit."

Roland became red with anger and shame, and when he resumed it was in a voice tremulous with ill-suppressed passion. "I did not come here for your sympathy, Senhor. If the circumstance I have mentioned had no relation to yourself, you had not seen me here. I say that I have now lost all that I was possessed of in the world."

"Again I must interrupt you, Senhor Roland, by saying that these are details for Geizheimer, not for me. He, as you well know, transacts all matters of money, and if you desire a loan, or are in want of any immediate assistance, I'm sure you'll find him in every way disposed to meet your wishes."

"Thanks, Senhor, but I am not inclined for such aid. I will neither mortgage my blood nor my courage, nor promise three hundred per cent. for the means of a night at the gambling-table."

"Then pray, Sir, how am I to understand your visit? Is it intended for the sake of retailing to me your want of fortune at play, and charging me with the results of your want of skill or luck?"

"Far from it, Senhor. It is simply to make known that I am ruined; that I have nothing left me in the world; and that, as one whose fortune has deserted him, I have come to ask back that bond by which I accepted your daughter's hand in betrothal."

A burst of laughter from Don Pedro here stopped the speaker, who, with flushed cheek and glaring eyeballs, stared at this sudden outbreak. "Do you know for what you ask me, Senhor?" said Rica, smiling insolently.

"Yes, I ask for what you never could think to enforce—to make me, a beggar, the husband of your daughter."

"Most true—I never thought of such an alliance. I believe you were told that Columbian law gives these contracts the force of a legal claim, in the event of survivorship; and you flattered yourself perhaps too hastily, that other ties more binding still might grow from it. If Fortune was as fickle with you here as at the card-table, the fault is not in me."

"But of what avail is it now?" said Roland, passionately. "If I died to-morrow, there is not sufficient substance left to buy a suit of mourning for my poor widow."

"She could, perhaps, dispense with outward grief," said Pedro, sneeringly.

"I say again," cried Roland, with increased agitation, "this bond is not worth the paper it is written on. I leave the service—I sail into another latitude, and it is invalid—a mere mockery!"

"Not so fast, Sir," said Pedro, slowly, "there is a redeeming clause, by which you, on paying seventy thousand doubloons, are released of your contract, with my concurrence. Mark that well—with my concurrence it must be. Now, I have the opinion of learned counsel, in countries where mayhap your adventurous fancy has already carried you, that this clause embraces the option which side of the contract I should desire to enforce."

"Such may be your law here; I can have little doubt that any infamy may pass for justice in this favoured region," said Roland, "but I'll never believe that so base a judgment could be uttered where civilisation prevails. At all events, I'll try the case. I now tell you frankly, that, to-morrow, I mean to resign my rank and commission in this service; I mean to quit this country, with no intention ever to revisit it. If you still choose to retain a contract whose illegality needs no stronger proof than that it affects to bind one party only, I'll not waste further time by thinking of it."

"I will keep it, Senhor," interrupted Pedro, calmly. "I knew a youth, once, who had as humble an opinion of his fortunes as you have now; and yet he died—not in this service, indeed, but in these seas—and his fortune well requited the trouble of its claimant."

"I have no right to trespass longer on you, Sir," said Roland, bowing. "I wish I could thank you for all your hospitality to me with a more fitting courtesy; I must confess myself your debtor without hope of repayment."

"Have you signified to Don Gomez Noronja your intention to resign?"

"I shall do it within half an hour."

"You forget that your resignation must be accepted by the Minister; that no peremptory permission can be accorded by a captain in commission, save under a guarantee of ten thousand crowns for a captain, and seven for

a lieutenant, the sum to be estreated if the individual quit the service without leave. This, at least, is law you cannot dispute!"

Roland hung down his head, thunderstruck by an announcement which, at one swoop, dashed away all his hopes. As he stood silent and overwhelmed, Don Pedro continued: "You see, Sir, that the service knows how to value its officers, even when they set little store by the service. Knowing that young men are fickle and fanciful, with caprices that carry them faster than sound judgment, they have made the enactment I speak of. And, even were you to give the preliminary notice, where will you be when the time expires? In what parallel south of Cape Horn? Among the islands of the Southern Pacific; perhaps upon the coast of Africa? No, no; take my advice; do not abandon your career; it is one in which you have already won distinction. Losses at play are easily repaired in these seas. Our navy——"

"Is nothing better than a system of piracy!" broke in Roland, savagely. "So long as, in ignorance of its real character, I walked beneath your flag, the heaviest crime which could be imputed to me was but the folly of a rash-brained boy. I feel that I know better now; I'll serve under it no more."

"Dangerous words, these, Senhor, if reported in the quarter where they would be noticed."

Roland turned an indignant glance at him as he uttered this threat, and with an expression so full of passion, that Rica, for a few seconds, seemed to feel that he had gone too far. "I did but suggest caution, Senhor," said he, timidly.

"Take care that you practise as well as preach the habit," muttered Roland, "or you'll find that you have exploded your own mine."

This, which he uttered as he left the room, was in reality nothing more than a vague menace; but it was understood in a very different sense by Pedro, who stood pale and trembling with agitation, gazing at the door by which the youth departed. At last he moved forward, and opening it, called out—"Senhor Roland! Roland, come back! Let me speak to you again." But already he was far beyond hearing, as with all his speed he hastened down the alley.

Don Pedro's resolves were soon formed; he rang his bell at once, and summoning a servant, asked if Don Gomez Noronja was still at table?

"He has retired to his room, Senhor," was the reply.

A few moments after, Rica entered the chamber of his guest, where he remained in close conversation till nigh daybreak. As he reached his own apartment, the sound of horses' feet and carriage-wheels was heard upon the gravel, and throwing up the window, Rica called out—

"Is that Don Enrique?"

"Yes, Senhor, taking French leave, as you would call it. A bad return for a Spanish welcome; but duty leaves no alternative."

"Are you for the coast, then?"

"With all speed. Our captain received important despatches in the night. We shall be afloat before forty hours. Adios!"

The farewell was cordially re-echoed by Rica, who closed the window, muttering to himself—"So! all will go well at last."

While Enrique was making all the speed towards the sea-shore a light calèche and four horses could accomplish, Roland was pacing with impatient steps the little plot of grass where so soon he expected to find himself in deadly conflict with his enemy.

Never was a man's mind more suited to the purpose for which he waited. Dejected, insulted, and ruined in one night, he had little to live for, and felt far less eager to be revenged of his adversary, than to rid himself of a hated existence. It was to no purpose that he could say, and say truly, that he had never cared for any of these things, of which he now saw himself stripped. His liking for Maritaña had never gone beyond great admiration for her beauty, and a certain spiteful pleasure in exciting those bursts of passion over which she exercised not the slightest control. It was caprice, not love; the delight of a schoolboy in the power to torment, without the wish to retain. His self-love, then, it was, was wounded on finding that she, with whose temper he had sported, could turn so terribly upon himself. The same feeling was outraged by Enrique, who seemed to know and exult over his defeat. These sources of bitterness, being all aggravated by the insulting manner of Don Pedro, made up a mass of indignant and angry feelings which warred and goaded him almost to madness.

The long-expected dawn broke slowly, and although, a few moments after sunrise, the whole sky became of a rich rose colour, these few moments seemed like an age to the impatient thoughts of him who thirsted for his vengeance.

He walked hastily up and down the space, waiting now and again to listen, and then, disappointed, resumed his path, with some gesture of impatience. At last he heard footsteps approaching. They came nearer and nearer; and now, he could hear the branches and the trees bend and crack, as some one forced a passage through them. A swelling feeling about the heart bespoke the anxiety with which he listened, when a figure appeared, which even at a glance he knew to be not Enrique's. As the man approached he took off his hat respectfully, and presented a letter.

"From Don Enrique?" said Roland and then tearing open the paper, he read—

"'AMIGO MIO,

"'Not mine the fault that I do not stand before you now instead of these few lines; but Noronja has received news of these Chilian fellows, and sent me to get the craft ready for sea at once. We shall meet then in a few hours; and, if so, let it be as comrades. The service and our own rules forbid a duel so long as we are afloat and on duty. Whatever be your humour when next we touch shore again, rely upon finding me ready to meet it, either as an enemy or as

"'Your friend,

"'ENRIQUE DA CORDOVA.'"

A single exclamation of disappointment broke from Roland, but the moment after all former anger was gone. The old spirit of comrade-affection began to seek its accustomed channels, and he left the spot, happy to think how different had been his feeling, than if he were quitting it with the blood of his shipmate on his hands.

Although he now saw that his continuance in the service for the present was inevitable, he had fully made up his mind to leave it, and, with it, habits of life whose low excesses had now become intolerable. So long as the spirit of adventure and daring sustained him, so long the respite of a few months' shore life was a season of pleasure and delight; but as by degrees the real character of his associates became clearer, and he saw in them men who cared for enterprise no further than for its gain, and calculated each hazardous exploit by its profit, he felt that he was now following the career of a bravo, who hires out his arm and sells his courage. This revolted every sentiment of his mind, and come what would, he resolved to abandon it. In these day-dreams of a new existence the memory of two years passed in the Pampas constantly mingled, and he could not help contrasting the happy and healthful contentment of the simple hunter with the voluptuous but cankered pleasures of the wealthy buccaneer. Once more beneath the wooded shades of the tall banana, he thought how free and peaceful his days would glide by, free from the rude conflicts he now witnessed, and the miserable jealousies of these ill-assorted companionships. For some hours he wandered, revolving thoughts like these; and at length turned his steps towards the Villa, determined, so long as his captain remained, that he would take up his quarters at Barcelonetta, nor in future accept of the hospitality of Don Rica's house. With this intention he was returning to arrange for the removal of his luggage, when his attention was excited by the loud cracking of whips, and the shrill cries that accompanied the sounds of "The Post! the Post!"

In a moment every window of the Villa was thrown open, and heads, in

every species of night-gear, and every stage of sleepy astonishment, turned out; for the Post, be it observed, was but a monthly phenomenon, and the arrival of letters was very often the signal for a total break-up of the whole household.

The long waggon, drawn by four black mules, and driven by a fellow whose wide-tasseled sombrero and long moustaches seemed to savour more of the character of a melodrama than real life, stopped before the chief entrance of the Villa, and was immediately surrounded by the guests, whose hurried wardrobe could only be excused in so mild a climate.

"Anything for me, Truxillo?" cried one, holding up a dollar temptingly between finger and thumb.

"Where are my cigarettos?"

"And my mantle?"

"And my gun?"

"And the Senhora's embroidered slippers?" cried a maid, as she ransacked every corner where the packages lay.

The driver, however, paid little attention to these various demands; but loosening the bridles of his beasts, he proceeded to wash their mouths with some water fetched from the fountain, coolly telling the applicants that they might help themselves, only to spare something for the people of Barcelonetta, for he knew there was a letter or two for that place.

"What have we here?" cried one of the guests, as a mass of something enveloped in a horse-sheet lay rolled up in the foot of the calèche, where the driver sat.

"Ah! par Dios!" cried the man, laughing, "I had nearly forgotten that fellow. He is asleep, poor devil! He nearly died of cold in the night!"

"Who is he—what is he?"

"A traveller from beyond San Luis in search of Don Pedro

"Of me?" said Don Pedro, whose agitation became, in spite of all his efforts, visible to every one; at the same instant that, pulling back the cloak rudely, he gazed at the sleeping stranger—"I never saw him before."

"Come, awake—stir up, Senhor!" said the driver, poking the passenger very unceremoniously with his whip. "We are arrived—this is the Villa de las Noches Entretenidas—here is Don Pedro himself!"

"The Lord be praised!" said a short, round-faced little man, who, with a nightcap drawn over his ears, and a huge cravat enveloping his chin, now struggled to look around him. "At last!" sighed he; "I'm sure I almost gave up all hope of it." These words were spoken in English, but

even that evidence was not necessary to show that the little plump figure in drab gaiters and shorts was not a Spaniard.

"Are you Don Peter, Sir—are you really Don Peter?" said he, rubbing his eyes, and looking hurriedly around to assure himself he was not dreaming.

"What is your business with me—or have you any?" said Rica, in a voice barely above a whisper.

"Have I!—Did I come six thousand miles in search of you? Oh dear, oh dear. I can scarcely think it all over, even now. But still there may be nothing done if he isn't here."

"What do you mean?" said Rica, impatiently.

"Mr. Roland Cashel; Roland Cashel, Esq., I should call him now, Sir."

"That's my name!" said the youth, forcing his way through the crowd, and standing in front of the traveller.

The little man put his hand into a breast-pocket, and drew out a little book, opening which he began to read, comparing the detail as he went on, with the object before him.

"Six foot and an inch in height, at least, olive-brown complexion, dark eyes and hair, straight nose, short upper lip, frowns slightly when he speaks;—just talk a little, will you?"

Cashel could not help smiling at the request; when the other added, "Shows his teeth greatly when he laughs."

"Am I a runaway negro from New Orleans that you have taken my portrait so accurately, Sir?"

"Got that at Demerara," said the little man, putting up the book, "and must say it was very near indeed!"

"I have been at Demerara," said Cashel, hoping by the admission to obtain some further insight into the traveller's intentions.

"I know that," said the little man. "I tracked you thence to St. Kitts, then to Antigua. I lost you there, but I got up the scent again in Honduras, but only for a short time, and had to try Demerara again; then I dodged down the coast by Pernambuco, but lost you entirely in June: some damned Indian expedition, I believe. But I met a fellow at New Orleans who had seen you at St. Louis, and so I tracked away south——"

"And in one word, having found me, what was the cause of so much solicitude, Sir?" said Cashel, who felt by no means comfortable at such a hot and unwearied pursuit.

"This can all be better said in the house," interposed Don Rica, who, relieved of any uneasiness on his own account, had suddenly resumed his habituai quiet demeanour.

"So I'm thinking too!" said the traveller; "but let me first land my portmanteau; all the papers are there; I have not lost sight of it since I started."

The parcels were carefully removed under his own inspection, and, accompanied by Don Pedro Rica and Roland, the little man entered the Villa.

There could be no greater contrast than that between the calm and placid bearing Don Pedro had now assumed, and the agitated and anxious appearance which Cashel exhibited. The very last interview he had sustained in that same spot still dwelt upon his mind; and when he declined Don Pedro's polite request to be seated, and stood with folded arms before the table, which the traveller had now covered with his papers, a prisoner awaiting the words of his judgment could not have endured a more intense feeling of anxiety.

"'Roland Cashel, born in York, A.D. 18—, son of Godfrey Cashel and Sarah, his wife,'" read the little man; then murmured to himself, "Certificate of baptism, signed by Joshua Gorgeous, Prebendary of the Cathedral; all right, so far. Now we come to the wanderings. Your father was quartered at Port-au-Prince, in the year 18—, I believe?"

"He was. I was then nine years old," said Cashel.

"Quite correct; he died there, I understand?"

Cashel assented by a nod.

"Upon which event you joined, or was supposed to join, the *Brown Peg*, a sloop in the African trade, wrecked off Fernando Po, same winter?"

"Yes: she was scuttled by the second mate, in a mutiny. But what has all this secret history of me to mean? Did you come here, Sir, to glean particulars to write my life and adventures?"

"I crave your pardon, most humbly, Mr. Cashel," said the little man, in a perfect agony of humiliation. "I was only recapitulating a few collateral circumstances, by way of proof. I was, so to say, testing—that is, I was——"

"Satisfying yourself as to this gentleman's identity," added Don Pedro.

"Exactly so, Sir; the very words upon the tip of my tongue—satisfying myself that you were the individual alluded to here"—as he spoke, he drew forth a copy of the *Times* newspaper, whose well-worn and much-thumbed edges bespoke frequent reference—"in this advertisement," said he, handing the paper to Don Pedro, who at once read aloud—

"'REWARD OF 500*l.*—Any person giving such information as may lead to the discovery of a young gentleman named Roland Cashel, who served for some years on board of various merchant vessels in the Levant, the African, and the West India trade, and was seen in New Orleans in the

autumn of 18—, will receive the above reward. He was last heard of in Mexico, but it is believed that he has since entered the Chilian or Columbian service. He is well known in the Spanish Main, and in many of the cities on the coast, as the Caballero.'"

Cashel's face was one burning surface of scarlet, as he heard the words of an advertisement which, in his ideas, at once associated him with runaway negroes and escaped felons; and it was with something like suffocation that he restrained his temper, as he asked why, and by whose authority, he was thus described?

The little man looked amazed and confounded at a question which, it would seem, he believed his information had long since anticipated.

"Mr. Cashel wishes to know the object of this inquiry—who sent you hither, in fact," said Don Rica, beginning himself to lose patience at the slowness of the stranger's apprehension.

"Mr. Kennyfeck, of Dublin, the law-agent, sent me."

"Upon what grounds—with what purpose?"

"To tell him that the suit is gained; that he is now the rightful owner of the whole of the Godfrey and Godfrey Browne estates, and lands of Ben Currig, Tulough Callaghan, Knock Swinery, Kildallooran, Tullimeoran, Ballycanderigan, with all the manorial rights, privileges, and perquisites appertaining to—in a word, Sir, for I see your impatience, to something, a mere trifle, under seventeen thousand per annum, not to speak of a sum, at present not exactly known, in bank, besides foreign bonds and securities to a large amount."

While Mr. Simms recited this, with the practised volubility of one who had often gone over the same catalogue before, Cashel stood amazed, and almost stupified, unable to grasp in his mind the full extent of his good fortune, but catching, here and there, glimpses of the truth, in the few circumstances of family history alluded to. Not so, Don Rica; neither confusion nor hesitation troubled the free working of his acute faculties, but he sat still, patiently watching the effect of this intelligence on the youth before him. At length, perceiving that he did not speak, he himself turned towards the stranger, and said,

"You are, doubtless, a man of the world, Sir, and need no apologies for my remarking that good news demands a scrutiny not less searching than its opposite. As the *friend* of Senhor Cashel"—here he turned a glance beneath his heavy brows at the youth, who, however, seemed not to notice the word—"as his friend, I repeat, deeply interested in whatever affects him, I may, perhaps, be permitted to ask the details of this very remarkable event."

"If you mean the trial, Sir, or rather the trials, for there were three at bar, not to mention a suit in equity and a bill of discovery——"

"No, I should be sorry to trespass so far upon you," interrupted Rica. "What I meant was something in the shape of an assurance—something like satisfactory proof that this narrative, so agreeable to believe, should have all the foundation we wish it."

"Nothing easier," said Mr. Simms, producing an enormous black leather pocket-book from the breast of his coat, and opening it leisurely on the table before him. "Here are, I fancy, documents quite sufficient to answer all your inquiries. This is the memorandum of the verdict taken at Bath, with the note of the Attorney-General, and the point reserved, in which motion for a new trial was made."

"What is this?" asked Cashel, now speaking for the first time, as he took up a small book of strange shape, and looked curiously at it.

"Cheque-book of the bank of Fordyce and Grange, Lombard-street," replied Simms; "and here, the authority by which you are at liberty to draw on the firm for the balance already in their hands, amounting to—let me see"—here he rapidly set down certain figures on the corner of a piece of paper, and with the speed of lightning performed a sum in arithmetic—"the sum of one hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds seven and elevenpence, errors excepted."

"This sum is mine!" cried Cashel, as his eyes flashed fire, and his dark cheek grew darker with excitement.

"It is only a moiety of your funded property," said Simms. "Castellan and Biggen, the notaries, certify to a much larger amount in the Three per Cents."

"And I am at liberty to draw at once for whatever amount I require?"

"Within that sum, certainly. Though, if you desire more, I'm sure they'll not refuse your order."

"Leave us for a moment, Sir," said Cashel, in an accent whose trembling eagerness bespoke the agitation he laboured under. "I have something of importance to tell this gentleman."

"If you will step this way, Sir," said Don Rica, politely. "I have ordered some refreshment in this room, and I believe you will find it awaiting you."

Mr. Simms gladly accepted the offered hospitality, and retired. The door was not well closed, when Don Rica advanced with extended hands towards Cashel, and said,

"With all my heart I give you joy—such good fortune as this may, indeed, obliterate every little cloud that has passed between us and make us once more the friends we have ever been."

Cashel crossed his arms on his breast, and coldly replied, "I thank you. But a few hours back, and one-half as much kindness would have made a child of me in feeling. Now it serves only to arouse my indignation, and my anger."

"Are you indeed so unjust—so ungenerous as this!" exclaimed Rica, in a tone, whose anguish seemed wrung from the very heart.

"Unjust—ungenerous! how?" cried Cashel, passionately.

"Both, Sir," said Rica, in a voice of almost commanding severity, "Unjust to suppose, that in thwarting your last resolve to leave a service in which you have already won fame and honour, I was not your best and truest friend; that in offering every opposition in my power to such a hot-headed resolution, I was not consulting your best interests; ungenerous to imagine that I could feel any other sentiment than delight at your altered fortunes, I, who gave you all that was dearest and nearest to me, on earth, my child—my Maritaña."

Had it not been for the passionate emotion of the last few words, Cashel's anger would have suggested a reply not less indignant than his question; but the sight of the hard, the stern, the unflinching Pedro Rica, as he now stood—his face covered by his hands, while his strong chest heaved and throbbed with convulsive energy—this was more than he felt prepared to look on. It was then only by a great effort he could say, "You seem to forget, Senhor Rica, how differently you interpreted this same contract but a few hours ago. You told me then—I think I hear the words still ringing in my ears—that you never thought of such an alliance; that your calculation took a less flattering estimate of my relationship."

"I spoke in anger, Roland; anger caused by your passionate resolve. Remember, too, that I preferred holding you to your contract, in preference to allowing you to redeem it by paying the penalty."

"Easy alternative," said Cashel, with a scornful laugh; "you scarcely expected a beggar, a ruined gambler, could pay seventy thousand doubloons. But times are changed, Sir. I am rich now! rich enough to double the sum you stipulated for. Although I well know the contract is not worth the pen that wrote it, I am willing to recognise it, at least so far as the forfeit is concerned."

"My poor child, my darling Maritaña," said Pedro, but in a voice barely audible. The words seemed the feeble utterance of a breaking heart.

"Sorrow not for her, Senhor," said Cashel, hastily. "She has no griefs herself on such a score. It is but a few hours since she told me so."

Don Pedro was silent; but a mournful shake of the head, and a still more mournful smile, seemed to intimate his dissent.

"I tell you, Sir, that your own scorn of my alliance was inferior to

heirs!" cried Cashel, in a voice of deep exasperation. "She even went so far as to say that she was a party to the contract only on the condition of its utter worthlessness. Do not, then, let me hear of regrets for *her*."

"And you believe this?"

"I believe what I have myself witnessed."

"What, then, if you be a witness to the very opposite? What if your ears reveal to you the evidence as strongly against, as now you deem it in favour of, your opinion?"

"I do not catch your meaning."

"I would say, what if from Maritaña's own lips you heard an avowal of her affection, would you conceive yourself at liberty to redeem a contract to which you were only one party, and by mere money—I care not how large you call the sum—to reject the heart you have made your own?"

"No, no, this cannot be," cried Cashel, struggling in a conflict of uncertainty and fear.

"I know my daughter, Sir," said Pedro, with an air of pride he well knew when and how to assume.

"If I but thought so," muttered Cashel to himself, and low as the words were, Rica heard them.

"I ask you for nothing short of your own conviction—the conviction of your own ears and eyes. You shall, if you please, remain concealed in her apartment while I question her on the subject of this attachment. If you ever supposed me base enough to coerce her judgment, you know *her* too well to believe it to be possible. But I will not insult myself by either supposition. I offer you this test of what I have said; accept it if you will, and with this condition, that you shall then be free to tear this contract, if you like, but never believe that I can barter the acknowledged affection of my child, and take money for her misery."

Cashel was moved by the truth-like energy of the words he heard; the very aspect of emotion in one he had never seen save calm, cold, and self-possessed, had its influence on him, and he replied, "I consent." So faintly, however, were the words uttered, that he was obliged to repeat them ere they reached Don Pedro's ears.

"I will come for you after supper this evening," said Rica. "Let me find you in the arbour at the end of the 'Hacienda.' Till then, adios." So saying, he motioned to Cashel to follow the stranger. Roland obeyed the suggestion, and they parted.

## CHAPTER III.

### MR. SIMMS ON LIFE AT THE VILLA.

He told them of men that cared not a d—n
For the law or the new police,
And had very few scruples for killing a lamb,
If they fancied they wanted the fleece.
SIR PETER'S LAMENT.

WHEN Roland Cashel rejoined Mr. Simms, he found that worthy individual solacing himself for the privations of prairie travel, by such a breakfast as only Don Pedro's larder would produce. Surrounded by various dishes whose appetising qualities might have suffered some impairment from a more accurate knowledge of their contents—sucking monkeys and young squirrels among the number—he tasted and sipped, and sipped again, till between the seductions of Sangaree and Curaçoa punch, he had produced that pleasing frame of mind when even a less gorgeous scene than the windows of the Villa displayed before him, would have appeared delightful.

Whether poor Mr. Simms's excess—and such we are compelled to confess it was—could be excused on the score of long fasting, or the consciousness that he had a right to some indulgence in the hour of victory, he, assuredly, revelled in the fullest enjoyment of this luxurious banquet, and, as Cashel entered the room, had reached the delicious dream-land of misty consciousness, where his late adventures and his former life became most pleasingly commingled; and Jaguars, Alligators, Gambusinos, and Rancheros, danced through his brain in company with Barons of the Exchequer and Masters in Chancery.

Elevated by the scenes of danger he had passed through—some real, the far greater number imaginary—into the dignity of a hero, he preferred rather to discuss prairie life and scenes in the Havannah, to dwelling on the topics so nearly interesting to Cashel. Nor was Roland a very patient listener to digressions, which, at every moment, left the high-road, and wandered into every absurd by-path of personal history.

"I always thought, Sir," said Simms, "and used to say it everywhere, too, what a splendid change for you this piece of good fortune would be, springing at a bound, as a body might say, from a powder-monkey into the wealth of a peer of the realm; but, egad, when I see the glorious life you

lead hereabouts, such grog, such tipple, capital house, magnificent country, and if I may pronounce from the view beneath my window, no lack of company, too! I begin to feel doubts about it."

If Cashel was scarcely pleased at the allusions to himself in this speech, he speedily forgave them in his amusement at the commentary Simms passed on life at the Villa; but yet would willingly have turned from either theme to that most engrossing one, the circumstances of his altered fortune. Simms, however, was above such grovelling subjects; and, as he sat, glass in hand, gazing out upon the garden, where strolling parties came and went, and loitering groups lingered in the shade, he really fancied the scene a perfect paradise.

"Very hard to leave this, you'll find it!" exclaimed Simms. "I can well imagine life here must be rare fun. How jolly they do seem down there," said he, with a half-longing look at the strange figures, who now and then favoured him with a salute or a gesture of the hand, as they passed.

"Come, let us join them," said Cashel, who, despairing of recalling him to the wished-for topic, was fain to consent to indulge the stranger's humour.

"All naval men?" asked Simms, as they issued forth into the lawn.

"Most of them are sailors!" said Cashel, equivocating.

"That's a fine-looking old fellow beneath the beech-tree, with the long Turkish pipe in his mouth. He's captain of a seventy-four, I take it."

"He's a Greek merchantman," whispered Cashel; "don't look so hard at him, for he observes you, and is somewhat irascible in temper, if stared at."

"Indeed, I shouldn't have thought——"

"No matter, do as I tell you; he stabbed a travelling artist the other day, who fancied he was a fine study, and wished to make a drawing of his head."

"Simms's jaw dropped suddenly, and a sickly faintness stole over him, that even all his late potations could not supply courage enough to hear such a story unmoved.

"And who is he, Sir, yonder?" asked he, as a youth, with no other clothing than a shirt and trousers, was fencing against a tree, practising, by bounds and springs, every imaginable species of attack and assault.

"A young Spaniard from the Basque," said Cashel, coolly; "he has a duel to-morrow with some fellow in Barcelonetta, and he's getting his wrist into play." Then calling out, he said, "Ah, José, you mean to let blood, I see!"

"He's only a student," said the youth, with an insolent toss of his head. "But who have we here?"

"A friend and countryman of mine, Mr. Simms," said Cashel, introduc-

ing the little man, who performed a whole circuit round the young Spaniard in salutations.

"Come to join us?" asked the youth, surveying him with cool impertinence. "What in the devil's name hast thou done that thou shouldst leave the Old World at thy time of life? Virtuous living or hypocrisy ought to have become a habit with thee ere now, old boy! eh?"

"He's only on a visit," said Cashel, laughing; "he can return to good society, not like all of us here."

"Would you infer from that, Sir——"

"Keep your temper, José," said Cashel, with an indescribable assumption of insolent superiority; "or, if you cannot, keep your courage for the students, whose broils best suit you."

"You presume somewhat too far on your skill with the rapier, Senhor Cashel," said the other, but in a voice far less elevated than before.

"You can test the presumption at any moment," said Cashel, insolently; "now, if you like it."

"Oh, Mr. Cashel! oh, Mr. Roland! for mercy's sake, don't!" exclaimed Simms.

"Never fear," interposed Cashel; "that excellent young man has better principles than you fancy, and never neglects, though he sometimes forgets himself."

So saying, he leisurely passed his arm beneath Simms's and led him forward.

"Good day, Senhor Cashel," said a tall and well-dressed man, who made his salutations with a certain air of distinction, that induced Simms to inquire who and what he was.

"A general in the service of one of the minor states of Germany," said Cashel; "a man of great professional skill; and, it is said, of great personal bravery."

"And in what capacity is he here?"

"A refugee. His sentence to be shot was commuted to imprisonment for life. He made his escape from Spandau, and came here."

"What was his crime?"

"Treachery, the very basest one can well conceive; he commanded the fort of Bergstein, which the French attacked on their advance in the second Austrian campaign. The assailants had no heavy artillery, nor any material for escalade; but they had money, and gold proved a better battering-train than lead. Plittersdorf—that's the general's name—fired over their heads till he had expended all his ammunition, and then surrendered, with the garrison, as prisoners of war. The French, however, exchanged him afterwards, and he very nearly paid the penalty of his false faith."

"And now is he shunned—do people avoid him?"

"How should they—how many here are privileged to look down on a traitor? Is it the runaway merchant, the defaulting bank clerk, the filching commissary, that can say shame to one whose crime stands higher in the scale of offence; the best we can know of any one here is, that his rascality took an aspiring turn; and yet there are some fellows one would not like to think ill of. Here comes one such; and as I have something like business to treat of with him, I'll ask you to wait for me, on this bench, till I join you."

Without waiting for any reply, Cashel hastened forward, and taking off his hat, saluted a sallow-looking man of some eight-and-forty or fifty years of age, who, in a loose morning-gown, and with a book in his hand, was strolling along in one of the alleys.

"Ha, Lieutenant," said the other, as lifting up his eyes he recognised Cashel—"making the most of these short hours of pleasure, eh? You've heard the news, I suppose; we shall be soon afloat again."

"So I've heard, Captain!" replied Cashel; "but I believe we have taken our last cruise together."

"How so, lad! *you* look well, and in spirits; and as for myself, I never felt in better humour to try a bout with our friends on the western coast."

"You have no friend, Captain, can better like to hear you say so; and as for me, the chances of fortune have changed. I have discovered that I need neither risk head nor limbs for gold; a worthy man has arrived here to-day with tidings that I am the owner of a large estate, and more money than I shall well know how to squander, and so——"

"And so you'll leave us for the land where men have learned that art? Quite right, Cashel. At your age a man can accustom himself to any and everything; at mine—a little later—at mine, for instance, the task is harder. I remember myself some years ago fancying that I should enjoy prodigiously that life of voluptuous civilisation they possess in the 'Old World,' where men's wants are met ere they are well felt, and hundreds, ay thousands, are toiling and thinking to minister to the rich man's pleasures. It so chanced that I took a prize a few weeks after; she was a Portuguese barque with specie, broad doubloons and gold bars for the mint at Lisbon, and so I threw up my command and went over to France and to Paris. The first dash was glorious; all was new, glittering, and splendid; every sense steeped in a voluptuous entrancement; thought was out of the question, and one only could wonder at the barbarism that before seemed to represent life and sorrow for years lost and wasted in grosser enjoyment. Then came a reaction, at first slight, but each day stronger; the headache of the debauch, the doubt of your mistress's fidelity, your friend's truth, your own

enduring good fortune, all these lie in wait together, and spring out on you in some gloomy hour, like Malays boarding a vessel at night, and crowding down from maintop and mizen! There is no withstanding; you must strike or fly. I took the last alternative, and, leaving my splendid quarters one morning at daybreak, hastened to Havre. Not a thought of regret crossed me; so quiet a life seemed to sap my very courage, and prey upon my vitals; that same night I swung once more in a hammock, with the rushing water beside my ear, and never again tried those dissipations that pall from their very excess; for, after all, no pleasure is lasting which is not dashed with the sense of danger."

While he was yet speaking, a female figure, closely veiled, passed close to where they stood, and, without attracting any notice, slipped into Cashel's hand a slip of paper. Few as the words it contained were, they seemed to excite his very deepest emotion, and it was with a faltering voice he asked the Captain by what step he could most speedily obtain his release from the service?

A tiresome statement of official forms was the answer, but Roland's impatience did not hear it out, as he said,

"And is there no other way—by gold, for instance?"

A cold shrug of the shoulders met this sally, and the Captain said,

"To corrupt the officials of the Government is called treason by our laws, and is punishable by death, just like desertion."

"Therefore is desertion the better course, as it involves none but one," said Cashel, laughing, as he turned away.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE KENNYFECK HOUSEHOLD.

Man being reasonable, must dine out;
The best of life is but a dinner-party.
AMPHYTRION, Canto IV.

It was about half-past six of an autumn evening, just as the grey twilight was darkening into the gloom that precedes night, that a servant, dressed in the most decorous black, drew down the window-blinds of a large and splendidly furnished drawing-room of a house in Merrion-square, Dublin.

Having arranged certain portly deep-cushioned chairs into the orderly disorder that invites social groupings, and having disposed various other

articles of furniture according to those notions of domestic landscape so popular at the present day, he stirred the fire and withdrew:—all these motions being performed with the noiseless decorum of a church.

A glance at the apartment, even by the fitful light of the coal-fire, showed that it was richly, even magnificently furnished. The looking-glasses were immense in size, and framed with all that the most lavish art of the carver could display. The hangings were costly Lyons silk, the sofas, tables, and cabinets were all exquisite specimens of modern skill and elegance, while the carpet almost rose above the foot in the delicate softness of its velvet pile. A harp, a grand pianoforte, and several richly-bound and gilded volumes strewed about gave evidence of tastes above the mere voluptuous enjoyment of ease, and in one window stood an embroidery-frame, with its unfinished labour, from which the threads depended in that fashion, that showed it had lately occupied the fair hands of the artist.

This very enviable apartment belonged to Mr. Mountjoy Kennyfeck, the leading solicitor of Dublin, a man, who, for something more than thirty years, had stood at the head of his walk in the capital, and was reputed to be one of its most respected and richest citizens. Mrs. Mountjoy Kennyfeck—neither for our own nor our reader's convenience dare we omit the "prénom"—was of a western family considerably above that of her liege lord and master in matter of genealogy, but whose quarterings had so far survived the family acres, that she was fain to accept the hand of a wealthy attorney, after having for some years been the belle of her county, and the admired beauty of Castle balls and drawing-rooms.

It had been at first, indeed, a very hard struggle for the O'Haras to adopt the style and title of Kennyfeck, and poor Matilda was pitied in all the moods and tenses for exchanging the riotous feudalism of Mayo for the decorous quietude and wealthy "insouciance" of a Dublin mansion; and the various scions of the house did not scruple to express very unqualified opinions on the subject of her fall; but Time—that heals so much—Time and Mr. Kennyfeck's claret, of which they all drank most liberally during the visits to town, assuaged the rancour of these prejudices, and "Matty," it was hinted, might have done worse; while some hardy spirit averred that "Kennyfeck, though not one of ourselves, has a great deal of the gentleman about him, notwithstanding."

A word of Mr. Kennyfeck himself, and even a word will almost suffice. He was a very tall, pompous-looking personage, with a retiring forehead, and a large prominent nose; he wore a profusion of powder, and always dressed in the most scrupulous black; he spoke little, and that slowly; he laughed never. It was not that he was melancholy or depressed; it seemed rather that his nature had been fashioned in conformity with the onerous

responsibilities of his pursuit, and that he would have deemed any exhibition of mirthful emotion unseemly and unbecoming one who, so to say, was a kind of high priest in the temple of equity. Next to the Chancellor's he venerated the decisions of Mrs. Kennyfeck; after Mrs. Kennyfeck came the Master of the Rolls. This was his brief and simple faith, and it is astonishing in what simple rules of guidance men amass vast fortunes, and obtain the highest suffrages of civic honour and respect!

Mr. Kennyfeck's family consisted of two daughters: the eldest had been a beauty for some years, and, even at the period our tale opens, had lost few of her attractions. She was tall, dark-haired, and dark-eyed, with an air of what in the Irish capital is called "decided fashion" about her, but in less competent circles might have been called almost effrontery. She looked strangers very steadily in the face, spoke with a voice full, firm, and unabashed—no matter what the subject, or who the audience—and gave her opinions on people and events with a careless indifference to consequences, that many mistook for high genius, rebellious against control.

Olivia, three years younger than her sister, had just come out; and whether that her beauty—and she was very handsome—required a different style, or that she saw more clearly "the mistake" in Miss Kennyfeck's manner, but she took a path perfectly her own. She was tenderness itself; a delicacy, too susceptible for this work-a-day world, pervaded all she said and did—a retiring sensitiveness that she knew, as she plaintively said, would never "let her be loved," overlaid her nature, and made her the victim of her own feelings. Her sketches—everlasting Madonnas dissolved in tears—her music, the most mournful of the melodies—her reading, the most disastrously ending of modern poems—all accorded with the tone which, after all, scarcely consorted well with a very blooming cheek, bright hazel eyes, and an air and carriage that showed a full consciousness of her captivations, and no small reliance on her capacity to exercise them.

A brief interval after the servant left the room the door opened, and Mrs. Kennyfeck entered. She was dressed for dinner, and if not exactly attired for the reception of a large company, exhibited, in various details of her costume, unequivocal signs of more than common care. A massive diamond brooch fastened the front of her dark velvet dress, and on her fingers several rings of great value glittered. Miss Kennyfeck, too, who followed her, was, though simply, most becomingly dressed; the light and floating material of her robe contrasting well with the more stately folds of the matronly costume of her mother.

"I am surprised they are not here before this," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, lying back in the deep recess of a luxurious chair, and placing a screen between herself and the fire. "Your father said positively on the 5th, and as

the weather has been most favourable, I cannot understand the delay. The packets arrive at four, I think?"

"Yes, at four, and the carriage left this at three to fetch them."

"Read the note again—he writes so very briefly always. I'm sure I wish the dear man would understand that I am not a client, and that a letter is not exactly all it might be, because it can be charged its thirteen and fourpence, or six and eightpence, or whatever it is."

Miss Kennyfeck took an open note from the chimney, and read:

"'DEAR MRS. KENNYFECK,—We have made all the necessary arrangements in London, and shall leave on the 2nd, so as to arrive at Merrion-square by the 5th. Mr. C—— would, I believe, rather have remained another day in town, but there was no possibility of doing so, as the 'Chancellor" will sit on Tuesday. Love to the girls, and believe me, yours very truly,

"'M. KENNYFECK.

"'Invite Jones and Softly to meet us at dinner.'"

The clock on the mantelpiece now struck seven, and scarcely had the last chime died away as a carriage drove up to the door.

"Here they come, I suppose," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a half-sigh.

"No, mamma; it is a hackney-coach. Mr. Jones, or Mr. Softly, perhaps."

"Oh dear! I had forgotten them. How absurd it was to ask these people, and your father not here!"

The door opened, and the servant announced the Rev. Mr. Knox Softly. A very tall, handsome young man entered, and made a most respectful but cordial salutation to the ladies. He was in look and mien the *beau idéal* of health, strength, and activity, with bright, full, blue eyes, and cheeks rosy as the May. His voice, however, was subdued to the dulcet accent of a low whisper, and his step, as he crossed the room, had the stealthy noiselessness of a cat's approach.

"Mr. Kennyfeck quite restored, I hope, from the fatigue of his journey?"

"We've not seen him yet," replied his lady, almost tartly. "He ought to have been here at four o'clock, and yet it's past seven!"

"I think I hear a carriage."

"Another——" hackney, Miss Kennyfeck was about to say, when she stopped herself, and, at the instant, Counsellor Clare Jones was announced.

This gentleman was a rising light of the Irish bar, who had the good fortune to attract Mr. Kennyfeck's attention, and was suddenly transferred from the dull duties of civil bills and declarations to business of a more pro-

fitable kind. He had been somewhat successful in his college career—carried off some minor honours; was a noisy member of a debating society, wrote leaders for some provincial papers, and with overbearing powers of impudence, and a good memory, was a very likely candidate for high forensic honour.

Unlike the first arrival, the Counsellor had few, if any, of the forms of good society in his manner or address. His costume, too, was singularly negligent; and as he ran a very dubious hand through a mass of thick and tangled hair on entering, it was easy to see that the greatest part of his toilet was then and there performed. The splashed appearance of his nether garments, and of shoes that might have done honour to snipe-shooting, also showed that the carriage which brought him was a mere ceremonial observance, and, as he would himself say, "the act of conveyance was a surplusage."

Those who saw him in court pronounced him the most unabashed and cool of men; but there was certainly a somewhat of haste and impetuosity in his drawing-room manner, that even a weak observer would have ascribed to awkwardness.

"How do you do, Mrs. Kennyfeck?—how do you do, Miss Kennyfeck?—glad to see you. Ah! Mr. Softly—well, I hope? Is he come—has he arrived?" A shake of the head replied in the negative. "Very strange—I can't understand it. We have a consultation with the Solicitor-General to-morrow, and a meeting in chambers at four."

"I shouldn't wonder if Mr. Cashel detained papa; he is very young, you know; and London must be so new and strange to him, poor lad!"

"Yes; but your father would scarce permit it," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, smartly. "I rather think it must have been some accidental circumstance—coaches are constantly upsetting, and post-horses cannot always be had."

Mr. Knox Softly smiled benignly, as though to say in these suggestions Mrs. Kennyfeck was displaying a very laudable spirit of uncertainty as to the course of human events.

"Here's Olivia," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as her younger daughter entered. "Let us hear her impressions—full of forebodings, I don't doubt."

Miss Olivia Kennyfeck performed her salutations to the guests with the most faultless grace, throwing into her curtsey to the curate a certain air of filial reverence very pretty to behold, and only a little objectionable on the score of the gentleman's youth and personal attractions; and then, turning to her mother, said,

"You are not uneasy, mamma, I hope? though, after all, this is about the period of the equinox."

"Nonsense, child! packets are never lost now-a-days in the Irish Chan-

nel. It's merely some sudden freak of gaiety—some London distraction detains them. Will you touch that bell, Mr. Clare Jones? It is better to order dinner."

There was something peremptory in the lady's tone and manner that rather damped the efforts at small-talk—never very vigorous or well-sustained at these ante-dinner moments—nor were any of the party very sorry when the servant announced that the soup was served.

## CHAPTER V.

### HOW ROLAND BECAME ENTITLED TO THE GODFREY BROWNE PROPERTY.

The sherry iced—the company still colder.
BELL'S IMAGES.

THE party, who now took their seats at table, were not made of those ingredients whose admixture accomplishes a social meeting. Their natures, pursuits, and tastes were only sufficiently unlike to suggest want of agreement, without possessing the broad contrasts that invite conversation by their own contrariety. Besides this, there was a sense of constraint over every one, from the absence of the host and his expected guest; and lastly, the very aspect of a gorgeously-decorated table, with vacant places, has always a chilling influence over those who sit around. A certain amount of propinquity is as essential to conversation, as good roads and easy distances are a necessary condition to a visiting neighbourhood. If you cannot address him or her who sits beside you without attracting the attention of the whole table to your remark, you are equally debarred from the commonplaces that induce table-talk, or the smart thing that cannot well be said too publicly.

The dinner here proceeded in very stately quietude, nor were the efforts of Mr. Jones to introduce a conversational spirit at all successful; indeed, that gifted gentleman would have willingly exchanged the unexceptionable cookery, and admirably-conditioned wine before him, for the riotous freedom of a bar mess—where sour sherry and nisi-prius jokes abounded, and Father Somebody's song was sure to give the scene a conviviality that only yielded its fascination to blind hookey, or spoiled five.

Far otherwise the curate. The angelic smile that sat upon his features mechanically; his low, soft, liquid voice; his gentle gestures, and even his little sallies of pleasantry, were in perfect accordance with the decorous

solemnity of a scene where the chink of a cut decanter, or the tingling sound of a silver dish-cover, were heard above the stillness of the company.

If, then, Mr. Knox Softly accompanied the ladies to the door, and followed them out with his eyes, with an expression beaming regretfulness at their departure, the Counsellor, very differently-minded, surrounded himself with an array of the dessert-dishes and decanters, and prepared to discuss his wine and walnuts to his perfect contentment.

"You have never met this Mr. Roland Cashel, I believe?" said Mr. Softly, as he filled a very large claret glass and tasted it enjoyably.

"Never," replied Jones, whose teeth were busily engaged in smashing almonds and filberts, in open defiance of a tray of silver nutcrackers before him. "I don't think he has been in Ireland since a mere child, and very little in England."

"Then his recovery of the estate was quite unexpected?"

"Mere accident. Kennyfeck came upon the proofs when making some searches for a collateral claim. The story is very short. This lad's father, whose name was Godfrey Cashel, was a poor lieutenant in the 81st, and quartered at Bath, when he chanced to discover that a rich old bachelor there, a certain Godfrey Browne, was a distant relation of his mother. He lost no time in making his acquaintance and explaining the relationship, which, however, brought him no more substantial benefit than certain invitations to dinner, and whist parties, where the unfortunate lieutenant lost his half-crowns.

"At length a note came one morning inviting him to breakfast, and to 'transact a little matter of business.' Poor Godfrey read the words with every commentary that could flatter his hopes, and set out in better spirits than he had known for many a year before. What then was his dismay to discover that he was only wanted to witness the old gentleman's will!—a very significant proof that he was not to benefit by its provisions.

"With a very ill-repressed sigh, the poor lieutenant threw a glance over the half-opened leaves, where leasehold, and copyhold, and freehold, and every other 'hold' figured among funded property, consols, and reduced annuities—with money lent on mortgages, shares in various companies, and what not,—a list only to be equalled by the long catalogue of those 'next of kin,' who, to the number of seventeen, were mentioned as reversionary heirs.

"'You are to sign your name here, Mr. Cashel,' said the solicitor, pointing to a carefully-scratched portion of the parchment, where already the initials were pencilled for his guidance.

"'Faith! and it's at the other side of the book I'd rather see it,' said the Lieutenant, with a sigh.

"'Not, surely, after seventeen others!' exclaimed the astonished attorney.

"'Even so—a chance is better than nothing.'

"'What's that he's saying?' interposed the old man, who sat reading his newspaper at the fire. The matter was soon explained by the attorney, and when he finished, Cashel added—'That's just it; and I'm to sail for the Cape on the 4th of next month, and if you'll put me down among the rest of the fellows, I'll send you the best pipe of Constantia you ever tasted, as sure as my name is Godfrey Cashel.'

"The old man threw his spectacles up on his forehead, wiped his eyes, and then replacing his glasses, took a deliberate survey of the poor Lieutenant who had proposed such a very 'soft' bargain. 'Eh! Clinchet,' said he to the attorney, 'can we do this for him?'

"'Nothing easier, Sir,—let the gentleman come in last, as residuary legatee, and it alters nothing.'

"'I suppose you count on your good luck,' said old Browne, grinning.

"'Oh, then, it's not from my great experience that way,' said Cashel. 'I've been on the 'Duke's list' for promotion seventeen years already, and, for all I see, not a bit nearer it than the first day; but there's no reason my poor boy should be such an unfortunate devil. Who knows but fortune may make amends to him one of these days? Come, Sir—is it a bargain?'

"'To be sure. I'm quite willing—only don't forget the Constantia. It's a wine I like a glass of very well indeed, after my dinner.'

"The remainder is easily told: the Lieutenant sailed for the Cape, and kept his word, even though it cost him a debt that mortgaged his commission. Old Browne gave a great dinner when the wine arrived, and the very first name on the list of legatees, his nephew, caught a fever on his way home from it, and died in three weeks.

"Kennyfeck could tell us, if he were here, what became of each of them in succession; four were lost, out yachting, at once; but, singular as it may seem, in nineteen years from the day of that will, every life lapsed,—and stranger still, without heirs, and the fortune has now descended to poor Godfrey Cashel's boy, the Lieutenant himself having died in the West Indies, where he exchanged into a native regiment. That is the whole story, and probably in a romance one would say that the thing was exaggerated, so much more strange is truth than fiction."

"And what kind of education did the young man get?"

"I suppose very little, if any. So long as his father lived, he of course held the position of an officer's son—poor, but in the rank of gentleman. After that, without parents—his mother died when he was an infant—he was thrown upon the world, and after various vicissitudes, became a cabin-

toy on board of a merchantman; then, he was said to be a mate of a vessel in the African trade, employed on the Gold Coast; just as probably a slaver —and last of all, he was lieutenant in the Columbian navy, which, I take it, is a very good name for piracy. It was in the Havannah we got a trace of him, and I assure you, strange as it may sound, Kennyfeck's agent had no small difficulty in persuading him to abandon that very free and easy service, to assume the rights and immunities of a very large property.

"Kennyfeck was to meet him on his arrival in England, about ten days ago, and they spent a few days in London, and were——But hark! there comes a carriage now—yes, I know the step of his horses—here they are!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### A FRACAS IN THE BETTING-RING.

**Ne'er mind his torn, ill-fashioned doublet,**
**Beshrew me! if he's not a pretty man.**

DON LOPEZ.

THE movement and bustle in the hall showed that Mr. Jones's surmise was correct, for scarcely had the carriage stopped than the street-door was flung wide open, and Mr. Pearse, the butler, followed by a strong detachment of bright-liveried menials, stood bowing their respectful compliments to their master and his guest. As Mr. Kennyfeck entered the house, he walked slowly and with difficulty, endeavouring at the same time to avoid all scrutiny of his appearance as he passed through the crowded hall; but, although his hat was pressed firmly over his brows, it could not entirely conceal a very suspiciously-tinted margin around one eye, while the care with which he defended his left arm, and which he carried in his waistcoat, looked like injury there, also.

He, however, made an attempt at a little sprightliness of manner, as, shaking his companion's hand with cordial warmth, he said,

"Welcome to Ireland, Mr. Cashel. I hope I shall very often experience the happiness of seeing you under this roof."

The person addressed was a remarkably handsome young man, whose air and carriage bespoke, however, much more the confidence that results from a sense of personal gifts, and a bold, daring temperament, than that more tempered ease which is the consequence of fashionable breeding.

Mr. Kennyfeck's felicitations on their arrival were scarce uttered, ere

Cashel had sufficiently recovered from his surprise at the unexpected magnificence of the house, to make any reply; for, although as yet advanced no further than the hall, a marble group by Canova—a centre lamp of costly Sèvres—and some chairs of carved ebony, served to indicate the expensive style of the remainder of the mansion.

While Cashel, then, muttered his acknowledgments, he added to himself, but in a voice scarcely less loud,

"Devilish good crib this, Master Kennyfeck."

"Pearse," said the host, "is dinner ready?"

"My mistress and the young ladies have dined, Sir; but Mr. Jones and Mr. Softly are in the parlour."

"Well, let us have something at once;—or, would you prefer, Mr Cashel, making any change in your dress first?"

"I say dinner above all things," said the youth, disencumbering himself of a great Mexican mantle.

"Perfectly right; quite agree with you," said Kennyfeck, endeavouring to assume a little of his guest's dash; "and here we are. Ah, Jones, how d'ye do? Mr. Cashel, this is my friend Mr. Jones. Mr. Softly, very glad to see you. Mr. Softly—Mr. Cashel. Don't stir, I beg; keep your places, we'll have a bit of dinner here, and join you at your wine afterwards. Meanwhile, I'll just step up-stairs, and be back again in a moment—you'll excuse me, I'm sure?"

"Oh, certainly," cried Cashel, who appeared as if he could excuse anything with a better grace than the ceremonious slowness of the butler's arrangements.

There was a pause of a few seconds as Mr. Kennyfeck left the room, broken, at last, by Mr. Jones asking if they had not been detained by contrary winds.

"No, I think not; I fancy the weather was pretty average kind of weather. Had we been expected here earlier?"

"Yes; Mrs. Kennyfeck mentioned to me Monday, and afterwards Tuesday, as the very latest day for your arrival."

Cashel made no remark, and, soon after, Mr. Pearse's entrance with the soup put an end to the conversation. "Mr. Kennyfeck desired me to say Sir, not to wait for him—he'll be down presently."

"What do you call this soup?"

"Mock-turtle, Sir."

"Rather too much Madeira in it for my taste; but that shan't prevent my having a glass of wine. Will you permit me, gentlemen?"

The parties bowed politely; but still the intercourse did not progress; and in the exchanged glances of those at the large table, and the sidelong looks

Cashel occasionally threw towards them, it was easy to see that neither party had made way with the other.

"I fear Kennyfeck is not going to make his appearance," said Cashel, as he seemed to hesitate about proceeding with his dinner.

"I shouldn't advise you waiting," cried Jones; "the fish is growing cold."

"I suspect Mr. Kennyfeck is fatigued by his journey, Sir," said Mr. Softly, in his most bland of voices; "I thought I remarked it by his face."

"Oh, did you?" said Cashel, with a very peculiar look of knowingness.

"Yes; you are aware, Mr. Cashel," interrupted Jones, "our friend isn't much used to that kind of thing. I suppose it's some years since he has had so much knocking about as in these last few days."

"I fancy so," said Cashel, with a significant smile that puzzled the lawyer exceedingly, and he ate on without making a further remark.

The two or three efforts made by Jones and Softly to converse together were, like nearly all similar attempts at perfect ease and self-possession, complete failures, and gradually slided down into monosyllables, and then to silence, when Cashel, who seemed to be enjoying his venison and Bordeaux with perfect zest, leaned back in his chair and said, "What kind of place is this same good city of Dublin? What goes forward here?"

As this question was more directly addressed to Jones, that gentleman prepared himself, not unwillingly, for an elaborate reply.

"Dublin, Mr. Cashel," said he, pretty much in the same tone he would have used in opening an address to a jury—"Dublin is a city, which, from a great variety of causes, will always be exposed to very variable and opposing criticism. To begin: it is provincial——"

"Is it slow?" interrupted Cashel, who had listened to this exordium with palpable signs of impatience.

"If you mean, has it its share of those habits of dissipation, those excesses so detrimental alike to health and fortune——"

"No, no; I merely ask what goes on here—how do people amuse themselves?" said Cashel, fencing to avoid any very lengthened exposure of the other's views.

"They dine, dance, drink tea, talk politics and scandal, like other folk but if you ask, what are the distinguishing features of the society——"

"What kind of sport does the country afford?" interrupted Roland, somewhat unceremoniously.

"Hunting, shooting, fishing, coursing——"

"What do you mean by hunting—a fox, is it?

Yes, fox-hunting and hare-hunting too"

A very insolent laugh was Cashel's answer, as, turning to Mr. Softly, he said, "Well, I own, all this does strike me as a very tiresome kind of life. Do you like Ireland, Sir?"

"I feel a deep interest in it," said the curate, with a most solemn manner.

"Yes, that's all very well; but do you like it?"

"Were it not for its darkness," said Mr. Softly, sighing, "I should say I liked it."

"Darkness," echoed Cashel, "darkness; why, hang it, you are pretty far north here. What is the darkness you speak of?"

"I alluded to Popery, Sir—to the obscuring mists of superstition and ignorance," replied Mr. Softly, with a kind of energetic timidity that made himself blush.

"Oh—I perceive—yes—I understand," muttered Cashel, who certainly felt all the awkwardness of a man caught in a lie.

"We have a very agreeable society among the Bar men," said Jones, returning to the charge in a new direction; "a great deal of pleasantry and fun goes on at our messes."

"Droll fellows, I suppose," said Cashel, carelessly. "I remember I knew a lawyer once, he was mate of a small clipper in the African trade—mischievous kind of devil he was, too—always setting the slaves by the ears, and getting money for settling the differences. They played him a good trick at last." Here he laughed heartily at the recollection for several minutes.

"What was it?" asked Jones, in some curiosity to learn how the Bar was respected on the banks of the Niger.

"They painted him black and sold him at Cuba," said Cashel, who once more broke out into laughter at the excellence of the jest.

Jones's and Softly's eyes met with a most complete accordance in the glances exchanged. Meanwhile, Cashel drawing his chair towards the larger table, filled his glass and proceeded to smash his walnuts with all the easy contentment of a man who had dined well.

"I perceive Mr. Kennyfeck is not likely to join us," said Softly, with a half-suggestive look towards the door.

"Tired, perhaps," said Jones, affecting what he opined to be the cool indifference of the highest fashion.

"More than that, I suspect," said Cashel, with a most unfeigned carelessness. "Did you remark his eye?"

"Yes!" exclaimed both together. "What could that mean?"

"A slight bit of a scrimmage we had on the way from town—a——"

"Mr. Kennyfeck engaged in a row!" cried Softly, almost incredible at the tidings.

"Yes. I fancy that is about the best word for it," said Cashel, sipping his wine. "I suppose one ought not to mention these kind of things, but of course they are safe with you. They'll never go further, I am certain."

"Oh, never—not a syllable," chimed in the two.

"Well, then, on our way here, I learned that there were to be races a few miles from Coventry, and as I saw our friend Kennyfeck had no fancy for the sight, I just slipped a few half-crowns into the postboy's hand and told him to drive there instead of taking the Liverpool road. Away we went at a good pace, and in less than an hour reached the course. I wish you saw the old gentleman's face when he awoke from a sound nap, and saw the grand stand with its thousand faces, all in a row, and the cords, the betting ring, and the whole circumstance of a race-ground. By good luck, too, the sharp jerk of our pull-up smashed a spring, and so we had nothing for it but to leave the chaise and wait till it could be repaired While my servant was away in search of some kind of a drag or other, to go about the field—there was no walking, what with the crowd and the press of horses, not to speak of the mud that rose over the ankles—we pushed on, that is, I did, with a stout grip of Kennyfeck's arm, lest he should escape—we pushed on, into the ring. Here there was rare fun going forward, every fellow screaming out his bets, and booking them as fast as he could. At first, of course, the whole was all ancient Greek to me. I neither knew what they meant by the 'favourite,' or 'the odds,' or 'the field,' but one somehow always can pick up a thing quickly, if it be but 'game,' and so, by watching here, and listening there, I managed to get a kind of inkling of the whole affair, and by dint of some pushing and elbowing, I reached the very centre of the ring where the great Dons of the course were betting together.

"'Taurus even against the field,' cried one.

"'Taurus against the field,' shouted another.

"And this same cry was heard on every side.

"'Give it in fifties—hundreds if you like better,' said a young fellow mounted on a smart-looking pony, to his friend, who appeared to reflect on the offer. 'Come, hurry on, man. Let's have a bet, just to give one an interest in the race.' The other shook his head, and the first went on. 'What a slow set, to be sure.—Is no one willing to back the field, even Come then, here's a hundred pound to any man who'll take the field against Taurus, for two thousand.'

"'Let me have your cob,' said I, 'and I'll take the bet.'

"He turned round in his saddle, and stared at me, as if I were something more or less than human, while a very general roar of laughing ran around the entire circle.

"'Come away, come away at once,' whispered Kennyfeck, trembling with fright.

"'Yes, you had better move off, my friend,' said a thick-set, rough-looking fellow, in a white coat.

"'What say you to five thousand, Sir, does that suit your book?' cried the young fellow to me, in a most insolent tone.

"'Oh, let him alone, my Lord,' said another. 'Take no notice of him.'

"'I say, Grindle,' cried a tall thin man with moustaches, 'who let these people inside the ring?'

"'They forces their way, my Lud,' said a little knocker-kneed creature, in a coat four times too big for him, 'and I says to Bill, de—pend upon it, Bill, them's the swell mob.'

"The words were scarcely out of the fellow's mouth, when a general cry of the 'swell mob' resounded on every side, and at once they closed upon us—some pushing—others elbowing—driving—and forcing, so that what with the dense crowd, and the tight hold Kennyfeck now kept of me, I was pinioned, and could do nothing. At last, by a vigorous twist, I shook them off from me, and laid two of the foremost at my feet. This I did with a Mexican trick I saw they knew nothing about: you first make a feint at the face, and then, dropping on the knee, seize the fellow by both legs, and hurl him back on his head—just stand up, I'll not hurt you."

"Thank you—I understand the description perfectly," said Mr. Softly, pale with terror at the proposed experiment.

"Well, the remainder is soon told. They now got in upon us, and of course I needn't say we got confoundedly thrashed—Kennyfeck was tumbled about like a football, every one that had nothing else to do had a kick at him, and there's no saying how it might have ended had not a certain Sir George Somebody recognised our poor friend, and rescued him. I'm not quite sure that I was quite myself about this time—Kennyfeck has some story of my getting on some one's horse, and riding about the course in search of the originators of the fray; the end of it, however, was, we reached Liverpool with sorer bones than was altogether pleasant, and although, when Kennyfeck went to bed, I went to the theatre, the noise only increased my headache, and it needed a good night's sleep to set me all right again."

"Mr. Kennyfeck taken for one of the swell mob!" exclaimed Softly,

with a sort of holy horror that seemed to sum up his whole opinion of the narrative.

"Very bad, wasn't it?" said Cashel, pushing the wine past; "but he's a capital fellow, took the whole thing in such good part, and seems only anxious that the story shouldn't get abroad. Of course I needn't repeat my caution on that subject?"

"Oh, certainly not! Shall we join the ladies?" said Mr. Jones, as he surveyed his whiskers, and arranged the tie of his cravat before the glass.

"I'm quite ready," said Cashel, who had quietly set down in his own mind that the ladies of the Kennyfeck family were a kind of female facsimile of the stiff-looking old attorney, and, therefore, felt very few qualms on the subject of his disordered and slovenly appearance.

Scarcely had Cashel entered the drawing-room than he found his hand grasped in Mr. Kennyfeck's, when, with a most dulcet accent, he said,

"I knew you'd forgive me—I told Mrs. Kennyfeck you'd excuse me for not joining you at dinner, but I was really so fatigued. Mrs. Kennyfeck—Mr. Cashel. My daughter, Mr. Cashel. My daughter Olivia. Well now, have you dined heartily—I hope my friends here took care of you?"

"I thank you. I never dined better—only sorry not to have had your company. We have our apologies to make, Mrs. Kennyfeck, for not being earlier; but, of course, you've heard that we did our very utmost."

"Oh! yes, yes; I explained everything," interrupted Kennyfeck, most eager to stop a possible exposure. "Mrs. Kennyfeck knows it all."

Although Cashel's manner and address were of a kind to subject him to the most severe criticism of the ladies of the Kennyfeck family, they evinced the most laudable spirit in their hospitable and even cordial reception of him, Mrs. Kennyfeck making room for him to sit on the sofa beside her—a post of honour that even the Castle Aides-de-camp only enjoyed by great favour—while the daughters listened with an attention as flattering to *him* as it was galling to the other two guests.

Mr. Softly, however, resigned himself to this neglect as to a passing cloud of forgetfulness, and betook himself to the columns of the *Morning Post* for consolation, occasionally glancing over the margin to watch the laughing group around the fire. As for Jones, Mr. Kennyfeck had withdrawn with that gentleman into a window, where the tactics of some bill in equity engaged their attention, manifestly, however, to the young Barrister's discontent, as his frequent stolen looks towards the ladies evidenced.

It was the first time that the Kennyfecks had ever deigned to listen to any one, whose claims to a hearing rested on higher grounds than the light gossip and small talk of the capital, the small fashionable chit chat of a pro-

vincial city, and which bears the same resemblance to the table-talk of the greater metropolis as do larks to ortolans, when disguised in the same kind of sauce, only those accustomed to the higher flavour being able to detect the difference. It was, then, with as much surprise as pleasure that they found themselves listening to the narratives in which not a single noble or lordly personage figured, nor one single incident occurred reflecting on the taste, the wealth, or the morals of their acquaintance. It was no less a novelty, too, for Cashel, to find any one a listener to descriptions of scenes and habits in whose familiarity he saw nothing strange or remarkable; so that when the young ladies, at first, attracted by mere curiosity, became gradually more and more interested in his stories, his flattered vanity gave new warmth to an enthusiasm always ardent, and he spoke of Prairie life and adventure with a degree of eloquence and power that might have captivated even less indulgent auditors.

It was, besides, the first time that they ever had seen great wealth unallied with immense pretension. Cashel, perhaps from character, or that his accession to fortune was too recent, and his consequent ignorance of all that money can do, whichever of these the cause, was certainly the most unassuming young man they had ever met. In comparison with him, the Aides-de-camp were princes of the blood; even Mr. Jones put forth a degree of pretension on the score of his abilities, which stood in strong contrast with the unaffected and simple modesty of Roland Cashel.

It is but fair to all parties to add, that dark and flashing eyes, shaded by long and drooping lashes; a high and massive forehead; a brown, almost Spanish complexion, whose character was increased by a pair of short, coal-black moustaches, did not detract from the merit of tales, which, as they chiefly related to feats of personal daring and address, were well corroborated by the admirable symmetry and handsome proportions of the relater.

Story followed story: now the scene lay in the low and misty swamps of the Niger, where night resounds with the dull roar of the beasts of prey, and the heavy plash of the sluggish alligator on the muddy shore; now, it was in the green wood of the Spice Islands, amid an atmosphere scented with perfume, and glittering with every gorgeous hue of plumage and verdure. At one moment he would describe a chase at sea, with all its high and maddening excitement, as each new vicissitude of success or failure arose; and then he would present some little quiet picture of shore life in a land, where the boundless resources of Nature supply, even anticipate, the wants and luxuries of man.

Whatever the interest, and occasionally it rose to a high pitch, that attended his narratives of danger and daring, the little sketches he gave

from time to time of the domestic life of these far-away people, seemed to attract the most delighted attention of his fair hearers, particularly when his narrative touched upon the traits, whether of beauty, dress, or demeanour, that distinguish the belles of New Spain.

"How difficult," said Miss Kennyfeck, "I could almost say, how impossible, to leave a land so abounding in the romance of life, for all the dull and common-place realities of European existence."

"How hard to do so without leaving behind the heart that could feel such ecstasies," murmured Olivia, with a half-raised eyelid, and a glance that made Cashel flush with delight.

"How shall we ever make Ireland compensate you for quitting so lovely a country," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a smile rarely accorded to anything lower than a Viscount.

"We have a Mexican proverb, Madam," said Cashel, gaily, "which says, 'Wherever the sun shines bright eyes shine also;' but enough of these tiresome memories, in which my egotism will always involve me. Shall we have a Fandango?"

"I don't know it; I never saw it danced."

"Well, the Manolo, then."

"Nor that either," said both girls, laughing.

"Well, will you learn? I'll teach you the Manolo. It's very simple. If you'll play the air, Miss Kennyfeck, it runs thus." Here he opened the pianoforte, and after a few chords, struck with a masterly finger, he played a little Spanish dance; but with a spirit of execution, and in such an exciting character of time and measure, that a general exclamation of delight broke from the whole room; Mr. Jones himself forgetting all rivalry, and Mr. Softly laying down his newspaper to listen, and for a moment carried away by the fascination of the spirit-stirring melody.

"That is the Manolo; come, now, and let me teach you, first the air and then the dance."

"Oh, I never could succeed to give it that character of bold and haughty defiance it breathes from you," said Miss Kennyfeck.

"Nay, nay, a man's hand is always so rude and heavy, it needs the taper finger of a lady,"—here Cashel bent and kissed the hand he held, but with such a deference and respect in the salute, that deprived the action, so novel to our eyes, of any appearance of a liberty,—"of a lady," he resumed, "to impart the ringing brilliancy of the saucy Manolo."

"Then play it over once more, and I'll try," said Miss Kennyfeck, who was a most accomplished musician, and had even already caught up the greater part of the air.

Cashel obeyed, and again the plaudits followed even more enthusiastically

than the first time. With a precision that called forth many a hearty "bravo" from Roland, Miss Kennyfeck played over the air, catching up all the spirit of its transitions from gay to plaintive, and from tender to a strain bold, daring, and energetic.

"Now for the dance," exclaimed Cashel, eagerly, as he busied himself in removing chairs and pushing back sofas. "Will you be kind enough to assist me with this table?"

Mr. Softly, the gentleman thus addressed, rose to comply, his face exhibiting a very amusing struggle between shame and astonishment at the position he occupied.

The space cleared, Roland took Olivia's hand, and led her forward with an air of exceeding deference.

"Now, Miss Kennyfeck, the step is the easiest thing in the world. It goes so, one two, one, two, three, and then, change—exactly, quite right, you have it perfectly. This is, as it were, an introduction to the dance, but the same step is preserved throughout, merely changing its time with the measure."

It would be as impossible to follow, as it would be unfair to weary the reader with the lesson, which now began, and yet we would like to linger on the theme, as our memory brings up every graceful gesture, and every proud attitude of the fascinating Manolo. Representing as it does, by pantomimic action, a little episode of devotion, in which pursuit and flight, entreaty, rejection, seductive softness, haughty defiance, timid fear, and an even insolent boldness, alternate and succeed each other, all the movements which expressive action can command, whether of figure or feature, are called forth. Now, it is the retiring delicacy of shrinking, timid loveliness, half hoping, half fearing, to be pursued—now the stately defiance of haughty beauty, demanding homage as its due. At one moment, the winning seductiveness that invites pursuit, and then, sudden as the lightning, the disdain that repels advance.

Not the least interesting part of the present scene was to watch how Olivia, who, at first, made each step and gesture with diffidence and fear, as she went on, became, as it were, seized with the characteristic spirit of the measure; her features varying with each motive of the music; her eyes, at one instant half closed in dreamy languor, and at the next flashing in all the brilliancy of conscious beauty. As for Roland, forgetting, as well he might, all his functions as teacher, he moved with the enthusiastic spirit of the dance—his rapturous gaze displaying the admiration that fettered him; and when at last, as it were yielding to long-proved devotion, she gave her hand, it needed the explanation of its being a Mexican fashion to excuse the ardour with which he pressed it to his lips.

Mrs. Kennyfeck's applause, however, was none the less warm; and, if any of the company disapproved, they prudently said nothing; even Mr. Softly, who only evidenced his feeling by a somewhat hasty resumption of the *Morning Post*, while the elder sister, rising from the piano, whispered, as she passed her sister, "Bad jockeyship, Livy dear, to make fast running so early."

"And that is the—what d'ye call it, Mr. Cashel?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"The Manolo, Madam. It is of Italian origin, rather than Spanish: Calabrian, I fancy; but, in Mexico, it has become national, and well suits the changeful temper of our Spanish belles, and the style of their light and floating costume."

"Yes, I suspect it has a better effect with short drapery than with the sweeping folds of our less picturesque dress," said Miss Kennyfeck, who, for reasons we must not inquire, took a pleasure in qualifying her approval.

"I never saw it appear more graceful," said Cashel, with a blunt abruptness far more flattering than a studied compliment. Olivia blushed; Mrs. Kennyfeck looked happy, and the elder sister bit her lips, and threw up her eyebrows, with an expression we cannot attempt to render in words.

"May I not have the honour of introducing you to the Manolo?" said Cashel, presenting himself before her with a deep bow.

"Thank you, I prefer being a spectator; besides, we could have no music —my sister does not play."

Olivia blushed; and, in her hasty look, there was an expression of gently conveyed reproach, as though to say, "This is unfair."

"Do you like music, Mr. Cashel?" continued Miss Kennyfeck, who saw the slight cloud of disappointment that crossed Roland's features. "Oh, I'm certain you do, and I know you sing!"

"Yes," said Cashel, carelessly; "as every one sings in that merry land I come from; but I fear the wild carollings of a Ranchero would scarce find acceptance in the polished ears of Europe."

"What are the melodies like, then?" asked Miss Kennyfeck, throwing into the question a most eager interest.

"You shall hear, if you like," said Roland, taking up a guitar, and striking a few full chords with a practised hand. "This is one of the war songs;" and without further preface he began. Had he even been less gifted than he was as to voice and musical taste, there was enough in the bold and manly energy of his manner, in the fiery daring of his dark eyes, and the expressive earnestness of his whole bearing, to attract the admiration of his hearers. But besides these advantages, he was not unskilled in the science of music, and even made so poor an instrument a full and masterly accompaniment imitating, as few but Spaniards can do, the

distant sound of drums, the dropping fire of cannon, the wild abrupt changes of battle, and the low plaintive sounds of suffering and defeat; so that, as he concluded, the whole character of the performance had ceased to be regarded as a mere musical display, but had the absolute effect of a powerfully-told story.

The Kennyfecks had often been called on in society to award their praises to amateur performances, in whose applause, be it said, *en passant*, a grateful sense of their being concluded always contributes the enthusiasm; but real admiration and pleasure now made them silent, and as their eyes first turned on the singer and then met, there was a world of intelligence in that one quiet, fleeting glance, that revealed more of secret thought and feeling than we, as mere chroniclers of events, dare inquire into.

Whether it was that this silence, prolonged for some seconds, suggested the move, or that Mr. Jones began to feel how ignoble a part he had been cast for in the whole evening's entertainment, but he rose to take his leave at once, throwing into his manner a certain air of easy self-sufficiency, with which in the "Courts" he had often dismissed a witness under cross-examination, and by a mere look and gesture contrived to disparage his testimony.

None, save Miss Kennyfeck, perceived his tactic. She saw it, however, and, with a readiness all her own, replied by a slight elevation of the eyebrow. Jones saw his "signal acknowledged," and went home contented. Poor man, he was not the first who has been taken into partnership because his small resources were all "ready," and who is ejected from the firm when wider and grander speculations are entered on. I am not certain either that he will be the last!

Mr. Softly next withdrew, his leave-taking having all the blended humility and cordiality of his first arrival; and now Mr. Kennyfeck was awakened out of a very sound nap by his wife saying in his ear, "Will you ask Mr. Cashel if he'll take a biscuit and a glass of wine before he retires?"

This proposition was politely declined, and after a very cordial hand-shaking with all the members of the family, Cashel said his good night, and retired.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PEEPS BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

**Ich möchte ihn im Schlafrock sehen.**
DER REISENDE TEUFEL.
**I'd like to see him in his robe-de-chambre.**
THE TRAVELLING DEVIL.

THERE has always appeared to us something of treachery, not to speak of indelicacy, in the privileges authors are wont to assume in following their characters into their most secret retirement, watching there their every movement and gesture, overhearing their confidential whisperings, nay, sometimes sapping their very thoughts, for the mere indulgence of a prying intrusive curiosity.

For this reason, highly appreciating, as we must do, the admirable wit of the "Diable Boiteux," and the pleasant familiar humour of the "Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin," we never could entirely reconcile ourselves to the means by which such amusing views of life were obtained, while we entertain grave doubts if we, that is, the world at large, have any right to form our judgments of people from any other evidence than what is before the public. It appears to us somewhat as if, that following Romeo or Desdemona into the "Green-room," we should be severe upon the want of keeping which suggested the indulgence of a cigar or a pot of porter, and angry at the high-flown illusions so grossly routed and dispelled.

"Act well your part—there all the honour lies," said the poet moralist; but it's rather hard to say, that you are to "act" it, off, as well as on the stage; and if it be true that no man is a hero to his valet, the valet should say nothing about it; and this is the very offence we think novel writers commit, everlastingly stripping off the decorations and destroying the illusions they take such trouble to create, for little else than the vain boastfulness of saying:—See, upon what flimsy materials I can move you to sentiments of grief, laughter, pity, or contempt. Behold of what vulgar ingredients are made up the highest aspirations of genius—the most graceful fascinations of beauty.

Having denounced, by this recorded protest, the practice, and disclaiming, as we must do, all desire to benefit by its enjoyment, we desire our reader, particularly if he be of the less worthy gender, to feel a due sense of the obligation he owes us, if we claim his company for half an hour on such a voyage of discovery. Step softly, there is no excuse for noise, as the

stair-carpet is thick, and not a sound need be heard. Gently, as you pass that green door—that is the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Kennyfeck. We will not linger there, nor invade the sanctity of those precincts, within which the monotonous tones of Mrs. K. are heard, revelling in that species of domestic eloquence which, like the liberty of the press, is oftener pleasant to those who employ, than to those who receive its judgments. Here, for a few minutes, let us stay. This is Roland Cashel's apartment; and, strange enough, instead of sleeping, he is up at his table, writing too, he, of all men, the least epistolary. There may be no great indication of character in mere handwriting, but the manner, the gesture, the degree of rapidity of the writer, as seen at the moment, are all full of individuality. Mark, then, with what speed his pen moves; not the daisy-cutting sling of the accomplished rider, but the slashing gallop of the heavy charger. Many a blot, never an erasure—so, there it goes—"Yours ever, Roland Cashel." And now, he begins another. Come, these are no times for squeamishness. Let us anticipate "Sir James," and read before he seals it.

Dublin.

"My dear Comrade,

"We are neither of us very gifted letter-writers, but events are always enough to tell, even when style be wanting; and here am I, so overwhelmed by the rush of new sensations, that I know not where to begin, or how to tell what has really happened since we parted, nor distinguish actual stubborn facts from my own fancies. My brief note from Porto Giacomo told you that I had succeeded to something like fifteen thousand pounds a year. I believe it is rather more, with a good round sum, I don't know how much, in bank; and now, here I am, just arrived, but marvellously at home, in the house of the worthy fellow that has established my claim.

"If I only knew so much of my good luck, I'd say it was no bad thing to be pleasantly domesticated in a capital mansion, with every refinement and luxury at hand, and two such girls, the daughters! Oh, amigo mio, you'd think wondrous little of the Barcelonetta belles, if I could show you these damsels! Such tempting shyness—such shrinking playful modesty and then so frank, without that slap-dash abruptness—Never mind—I own freely that Maritaña is lovely—there is not such a mouth—As to a foot—well, well. I wish I could take a peep at you all again, just as night closes, and she comes out to take her walk upon the grass, and hear her singing as she went, or watch her as she danced the Manolo, which—by the way—one of the girls here caught up wonderfully, and in almost an instant, too. But the Manolo, with a long, sweeping, flounced, and furbelowed petticoat! Only think of the absurdity. Not but she looked exceedingly pretty

the while, but how much better had she, if one could only have cut half a yard off her drapery!

"Have you received the pistols I sent from London? I hope you'll think them handsome—I know they are true, having tried them at thirty-five, and even fifty paces. The yataghan I'm certain you'll admire; it has the peculiar handle and hilt you're fond of. Pray let our friends on the Chilian side learn something of the qualities of the blade itself. I have been thinking since about the emeralds—and, perhaps, Maritaña may refuse them. If so, do what you will with them so that I hear no more of the matter. And now for the bond;—release from me that tie by all means. It is not that I really feel it in the light of a contract—Maritaña never did—but I have it ever on my mind like a debt. I give you full powers; draw upon me for the sum you please, and I promise not to dishonour the cheque. Pedro likes a good bargain, and don't balk him!

"I don't know what your own views are in that quarter, but I tell you frankly that Maritaña has higher and bolder aspirations than either you or I were likely to aid her in attaining. She is a proud girl, Enrique, and will never care for any man that is not able and willing to elevate her into a very different sphere from that she moves in. I never actually loved her—I certainly do not do so now—and yet I cannot get her out of my head.

"Before I forget it, let me ask you to pay Ruy Dias two hundred doubloons for me. The horse I killed was not worth forty, but these are not times for bargaining, and the fellow didn't want to part with the beast. Alconetti—the Italian in the Plaza—has something against me; pay it too; and now that I am on the subject of debts, whenever you next cruise off Ventillanos, send a party on shore to catch the Dean, and give him four-and-twenty with a rope's-end; say it is from me; he'll know why, and so shall you, when you inform me that it has been cleverly effected.

"Above all, my dear boy, write; I so long to hear about you all, and to know all that has happened since I left you. Send the old trunks with my uniform to the agents in the Havannah; I'd like to see them once more. François may keep anything else of mine, except what you would like to select as a 'souvenir.' Don't let Rica write to me. I feel I should have no chance in a correspondence with him; nor need I have any, because whatever you say, I agree to—remember that.

"If you can manage about the emeralds, it would be the most gratifying news to me. You might tell her that we are so certain of never meeting again, and that all is now over for ever, and so on.—It would have an air of unkindness to reject them. Besides, I see no reason why she should! No matter; I needn't multiply reasons, where if one will not suffice, a thousand

must fail, and the chances are, if she suspect my anxiety on the subject, it will decide her against me. Do it, then, all in your own way.

"Have I said all I wanted? Heaven knows, my head is full; my heart, too, is not without its load. I wish you were here. I wish it for many reasons. I already begin to suspect you are right about the sudden effect a spring into wealth may produce, but I hope that all you said on that score may not be true. If I thought so, I'd——No matter, I'll endeavour to show that you are unjust, and that is better.—Yours ever,

"ROLAND CASHEL.

"Don Enrique da Cordova,
Lieutenant of the Columbian frigate *Esmeralda.*
Care of Messrs. Eustache et Le Moine, merchants, Havannah."

The next epistle which followed was far more brief. It was thus:

'Messrs. Vanderhaeghen und Droek, Antwerp.

"Enclosed is an order on Hamerton for seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-eight gulden, principal and interest for three years, of an unjust demand made by you on me before the tribunal of Bruges.

"You failed, even with all the aid of your knavish laws, and more knavish countrymen, to establish this iniquitous claim; and only succeeded in exhibiting yourselves as rogues and swindlers, good burgher-like qualities in your commercial city.

"I have now paid what I never owed, but there still remains between us an unsettled score. Let my present punctuality guarantee the honourable intentions I entertain of settling it one day, till when, as you have shown yourselves my enemy,

"Believe me to be yours,
"ROLAND CASHEL."

The order on the Banker ran as follows:

"Pay to Vanderhaeghen und Droek, two of the greatest knaves alive, seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-eight gulden, being the principal and interest for three years of a dishonest claim made upon

"ROLAND CASHEL.

To Hamerton and Co., Cheapside."

With all that soothing consciousness we hear is the result of good actions, Cashel lay down on his bed immediately on concluding this last epistle, and was fast asleep almost before the superscription was dried.

And now, worthy reader, another peep, and we have done. Ascending

cautiously the stairs, you pass through a little conservatory, at the end of which a heavy cloth curtain conceals a door. It is that of a dressing-room —off which, at opposite sides, two bedrooms lie. This same dressing-room, with its rose-coloured curtains and ottoman, its little toilet-tables of satin-wood, its mirrors framed in alabaster, its cabinets of Buhl, and the book-shelves so coquettishly curtained with Malines lace, is the common property of the two sisters whom we so lately introduced to your notice.

There were they wont to sit for hours after the return from a ball, discussing the people they had met, their dress, their manner, their foibles and flirtations; criticising with no mean acuteness all the varied games of match-making mammas and intriguing aunts, and canvassing the schemes and snares so rife around them. And, oh, ye simple worshippers of muslin-robed innocence! oh, ye devoted slaves of ringleted loveliness and blooming freshness! bethink ye what wily projects lie crouching in hearts that would seem the very homes of careless happiness—what calculations—what devices—how many subtleties that only beauty wields or simple man is vanquished by!

It was considerably past midnight as the two girls sat at the fire, their dressing-gowns and slippered feet showing that they had prepared for bed; but the long luxuriant hair, as yet uncurled, flowed in heavy masses on their neck and shoulders. They did not, as usual, converse freely together; a silence and a kind of constraint sat upon each, and although Olivia held a book before her, it was less for the purpose of reading than as a screen against the fire, while her sister sat with folded arms and gently drooping head, apparently lost in thought. It was after a very lengthened silence, and in a voice which showed that the speaker was following up some train of thought, Miss Kennyfeck said,

"And do you really think him handsome, Olivia?"

"Of whom are you speaking, dear?" said Olivia, with the very softest accent.

Miss Kennyfeck started, her pale cheeks became slightly red, as, with almost keen irony, she replied: "Could you not guess? Can I mean any one but Mr. Clare Jones?"

"Oh, he's a downright fright," answered the other; "but what could have made you think of him?"

"I was not thinking of him, nor were you either, sister dear," said Miss Kennyfeck, fixing her eyes full upon her; "we were both thinking of the same person. Come, what use in such subterfuges? Honesty, Livy, may not be the 'best policy,' but it has one great advantage, it saves a deal of time; and so I repeat my question, do you think him handsome?"

"If you mean Mr. Cashel, dearest," said the younger, half bashfully, "I

rather incline to say he is. His eyes are very good; his forehead and brow——"

"There—no inventory, I beg—the man is very well-looking, I dare say but I own he strikes me as '*tant soit peu sauvage.*' Don't you think so?"

"True, his manners——"

"Why he has none; the man has a certain rakish free-and-easy demeanour, that, with somewhat more breeding, would rise as high as 'tigerism,' but now is detestable vulgarity."

"Oh, dearest, you are severe."

"I rather suspect that you are partial."

"I, my dear! not I, in the least. He is not, by any means, the style of person I like. He can be very amusing, perhaps; he certainly is very odd—very original."

"He is very rich, Livy," said the elder sister, with a most dry gravity.

"That can scarcely be called a fault, still less a misfortune," replied Olivia, slyly.

"Well, well, let us have done with aphorisms, and speak openly. If you are really pleased with his manner and address, say so at once, and I'll promise never to criticise too closely a demeanour which, I vow, does not impress me highly—only be candid."

"But I do not see any occasion for such candour, my dear. He is no more to *me* than he is to *you*. I ask no protestations from *you* about this Mr. Roland Cashel."

Miss Kennyfeck bit her lip and seemed to repress a rising temptation to reply, but was silent for a moment, when she said, in a careless, easy tone,

"Do you know, Livy dearest, that this same Manolo you danced this evening is not by any means a graceful performance to look at, at least when danced with long, sweeping drapery, flapping here and flouncing there. It may suit those half-dressed Mexican damsels who want to display a high arched instep and a rounded ankle, and who know that they are not transgressing the ordinary limits of decorum in the display; but certainly your friend Mr. Softly did not accord all his approval. Did you remark him?"

"I did not; I was too much engaged in learning the figure; but Mr. Softly disapproves of all dancing."

"Oh, I know he does," yawned Miss Kennyfeck, as if the very mention of his name suggested sleep, "the dear man has his own notions of pleasantry—little holy jokes about Adam and Eve. There is nothing so intolerable to me as the insipid playfulness of your young parson, except, perhaps, the coarse fun of your rising barrister. How I hate Mr. Clara Jones."

"He is very under-bred."

"He is worse—the rudest person I ever met—so familiar."

"Why will he always insist on shaking hands?"

"Why will he not at least wash his own, occasionally?"

"And then his jests from the Queen's Bench—the last *mot*—I'm sure I often wished it were so literally, of some stupid Chief Justice. Well, really, in comparison, your savage friend is a mirror of good looks and good manners."

"Good night, my dear," said Olivia, rising, as though to decline a renewal of the combat.

"Good night," echoed her sister, bluntly, "and pleasant dreams of 'Roland the brave—Roland the true;' the latter quality being the one more in request at this moment." And so, humming the well-known air, she took her candle, and retired.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LOVE v. LAW.

**Ay! marry—they have wiles,**
**Compared to which, our schemes are honesty**
**THE LAWYER'S DAUGHTER.**

NOTWITHSTANDING all that we hear said against Castle-building, how few among the unbought pleasures of life are so amusing, nor are we certain that these shadowy speculations—these "white lies" that we tell to our own conscience—are not so many incentives to noble deeds and generous actions. These "imaginary conversations" lift us out of the jog-trot path of daily intercourse, and call up hopes and aspirations that lie buried under the heavy load of wearisome common-places of which life is made up, and thus permit a man immersed as he may be in the fatigues of a profession, or a counting-house, harassed by law, or worried by the Three per Cents., to be a hero to his own heart at least for a few minutes once a week.

But if "Castle-building" be so pleasurable when a mere visionary scheme, what is it when it comes associated with all the necessary conditions for accomplishment—when not alone the plan and elevation of the edifice are there, but all the materials and every appliance to realise the conception?

Just fancy yourself "two or three and twenty," waking out of a sound

and dreamless sleep, to see the mellow sun of an autumnal morning straining its rays through the curtains of your bedroom. Conceive the short and easy struggle by which, banishing all load of cares and duties in which you were once immersed, you spring, as by a bound, to the joyous fact that you are the owner of a princely fortune, with health and ardent spirit, a temper capable of, nay, eager for engagement, a fearless courage, and a heart unchilled. Think of this, and say, is not the first-waking half-hour of such thoughts the brightest spot of a whole existence?

Such was the frame of mind in which our hero awoke, and lay for some time to revel in! We could not, if we would, follow the complex tissue of day-dreams that wandered over every clime, and in the luxuriant rapture of power, created scenes of pleasure, of ingredients the most far-fetched and remote. The "actual" demands our attention more urgently than the "ideal," so that we are constrained to follow the unpoetical steps of so ignoble a personage as Mr. Phillis—Cashel's new valet—who now broke in upon his master's reveries, as he entered with hot water, and the morning papers.

"What have you got there?" cried Cashel, not altogether pleased at the intrusion.

"The morning papers! Lord Ettlecombe"—his former master, and his universal type—"always read the *Post*, Sir, before he got out of bed."

"Well, let me see it," said Cashel, who, already impressed with the necessity of conforming to a new code, was satisfied to take the law even from so humble an authority as his own man.

"Yes, Sir. Our arrival is announced very handsomely among the fashionable intelligence, and the *Dublin Mail* has copied the paragraph stating that we are speedily about to visit our Irish estates."

"Ah, indeed," said Cashel, somewhat flattered at his new-born notoriety; "where is all this?"

"Here, Sir, under 'Movements in High Life:' 'The Duke of Uxoter to Lord Debbington's beautiful villa at Maulish—Sir Harry and Lady Emeline Morpas, &c.,—Rosenorris—Lord Fetcherton——' No, here we have it, Sir—'Mr. Roland Cashel and suite'—Kennyfeck and self, Sir—'from Mivart's, for Ireland. We understand that this *millionnaire* proprietor is now about to visit his estates in this country, preparatory to taking up a residence finally amongst us. If report speak truly, he is as accomplished as wealthy, and will be a very welcome accession to the ranks of our country gentry.'"

"How strange that these worthy people should affect to know or care anything about me or my future intentions," said Cashel, innocently.

"Oh Sir, they really know nothing—that little thing is mine."

"Yours! how yours?"

"Why, I wrote it, Sir. When I lived with Sir Giles Heathcote, we always fired off a certain number of these signal-guns when we came to a new place. Once the thing was set a-going, the newspaper fellows followed up the lead themselves. They look upon a well-known name as of the same value as a fire, or a case of larceny. I have known a case of seduction by a Marquis to take the 'pas' of the last murder in the Edgeware-road."

"I have no fancy for this species of publicity," said Cashel, seriously.

"Believe me, Sir, there is nothing to be done without it. The press, Sir, is the fourth estate. They can ignore anything now-a-days, from a speech in Parliament to the last new novel,—from the young beauty just come out to the newly-launched line-of-battle-ship. A friend of mine, some time back, tried the thing to his cost, Sir. He invented an admirable moustache-paste; he even paid a guinea to an Oxford man for a Greek name for it; well, Sir, he would not advertise in the dailies, but only in bills. Mark the consequence. One of the morning journals, in announcing the arrival of the Prince of Koemundkuttingen on a visit to Colonel Sibthorp, mentioned, that in the fraternal embrace of these two distinguished personages, their moustaches, anointed with the new patent adhesive Eukantherostickostecon, became actually so fastened together (as the fellow said, like two clothes-brushes), that after a quarter of an hour's vain struggle they had to be cut asunder. From that moment, Sir, the paste was done up; he sold it as harness stuff the week after, and left the hair and beard line altogether."

As Cashel's dressing proceeded, Mr. Phillis continued to impose upon him those various hints and suggestions respecting costume, for which that accomplished gentleman's gentleman was renowned.

"Excuse me, but you are not going to wear that coat, I hope. A morning dress should always incline to what artists call 'neutral tints;' there should also be nothing striking, nothing that would particularly catch the eye, except in those peculiar cases, where the wearer, adopting a certain colour, not usually seen, adheres strictly to it, just as we see my Lord Blenneville with his old coffee-coloured cut-away, and Sir Francis Heming with his light-blue frock; Colonel Mordaunt's Hessians are the same kind of thing."

"This is all mere trifling," said Cashel, impatiently; "I don't intend to dress like the show-figure in a tailor's shop, to be stared at."

"Exactly so, Sir; that is what I have been saying; any notoriety is to be avoided where a gentleman has a real position. Now, with a dark frock, grey trousers, and this plain, single-breasted vest, your costume is correct."

If Cashel appeared to submit to these dictations with impatience, he, really, received them as laws to which he was, in virtue of his station, to be bound. He had taken Mr. Phillis, exactly as he had engaged the services of a celebrated French cook, as a person to whom a "department" was to be entrusted, and feeling that he was about to enter on a world whose habits of thinking and prejudices were all strange, he resolved to accept of guidance, with the implicitness that he would have shown in taking a pilot to navigate him through a newly-visited channel. Between this sense of submission, and a certain feeling of shame at the mock importance of these considerations, Cashel exhibited many symptoms of impatience, as Mr. Phillis continued his revelations on dress, and was sincerely happy when that refined individual, having slowly surveyed him, pronounced a faint "Yes, very near it," and withdrew.

There was a half glimmering suspicion, like a struggling ray of sunlight stealing through a torn and ragged cloud, breaking on Roland's mind, that if wealth were to entail a great many requirements, no matter how small each, of obedience to the world's prescription, that he, for one, would prefer his untrammelled freedom to any amount of riches. This was but a fleeting doubt, which he had no time to dwell upon, for already he was informed by the butler that Mrs. Kennyfeck was waiting breakfast for him.

Descending the stairs rapidly, he had just reached the landing opposite the drawing-room, when he heard the sounds of a guitar accompaniment, and the sweet silvery tones of a female voice. He listened, and to his amazement heard that the singer was endeavouring, and with considerable success, too, to remember his own Mexican air, that he had sung the preceding evening.

Somehow, it struck him he had never thought the melody so pretty before; there was a tenderness in the plaintive parts he could not have conceived. Not so the singer, for after a few efforts to imitate one of Roland's bolder passages, she drew her finger impatiently across the chords, and exclaimed, "It is of no use, it is only the Caballero himself can do it."

"Let him teach you, then!" cried Cashel, as he sprang into the room, wild with delight.

"Oh, Mr. Cashel, what a start you've given me!" said Olivia Kennyfeck, as, covered with blushes, and trembling with agitation, she leaned on the back of a chair.

"Oh, pray forgive me," said he, eagerly; "but I was so surprised, so delighted to hear you recalling that little song, I really forgot everything else. Have I startled you, then?"

"Oh, no; it's nothing. I was trying a few chords. I thought I was quite alone."

"But you'll permit me to teach you some of our Mexican songs, won't you? I should be so charmed to hear them sung as you could sing them."

"It is too kind of you," said she, timidly; "but I am no musician. My sister is a most skilful performer; but *I* really know nothing—a simple ballad—and a canzonette—are the extent of my efforts."

"For our Prairie songs, it is the feeling supplies all the character. They are wild, fanciful things, with no higher pretensions than to recal some trait of the land they belong to, and I should be so flattered if you would take an interest in the Far West."

"How you must love it! How you must long to return to it!" said Olivia, raising her long drooping lashes, and letting her eyes rest, with an expression of tender melancholy, on Cashel.

What he might have said there is no guessing,—nay, for his sake, and for hers too, it is better not even to speculate on it; but ere he could reply, another speaker joined in the colloquy, saying—

"Good morning, Mr. Cashel. Pray don't forget, when the lesson is over, that we are waiting breakfast." So saying, and with a laugh of saucy raillery, Miss Kennyfeck passed down the stairs, not remaining to hear his answer.

"Oh, Mr. Cashel!" exclaimed Olivia, with a tone half reproachful, half shy, "we shall be scolded,—at least, I shall," added she. "It is the unforgivable offence in this house to be late at breakfast."

Cashel would very willingly have risked all the consequences of delay for a few minutes longer of their interview, but already she had tripped on down stairs, and with such speed as to enter the breakfast-parlour a few seconds before him. Roland was welcomed by the family without the slightest shade of dissatisfaction at his late appearance, cordial greetings and friendly inquiries as to how he had rested pouring in on every side.

"What's to be done with Mr. Cashel to-day? I hope he is not to be teased by business people and red-tapery," said Mrs. Kennyfeck to her husband.

"I am afraid," said the silky attorney—"I am very much afraid, I must trespass on his kindness to accompany me to the Master's office. There are some little matters which will not wait."

"Oh, they must," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, peremptorily. "Who is the Master—Liddard—isn't it? Well, tell him to put it off: Mr. Cashel must really have a little peace and quietness after all his fatigues."

"It will only take an hour at most, Mrs. Kennyfeck," remonstrated her submissive mate.

"Well, that is nothing," cried Cashel. "I'm not in the least tired, and the day is long enough for everything."

"Then we have a little affair which we can manage at home here about the mortgages. I told you——"

"I believe you did," replied Cashel, laughing; "but I don't remember a word of it. It's about paying some money, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's the redemption of two very heavy claims," exclaimed Kennyfeck, perfectly shocked at the indifference displayed by the young man,—"claims for which we are paying five and a half per cent."

"And it would be better to clear them off?" said Cashel, assuming a show of interest in the matter he was far from feeling.

"Of course it would. There is a very large sum laying to your credit at Falkner's, for which you receive only three per cent."

"Don't you perceive how tiresome you are, dear Mr. Kennyfeck?" said his wife. "Mr. Cashel is bored to death with all this."

"Oh, no! not in the least, Madam. It ought to interest me immensely; and so all these things will, I'm sure; but I was just thinking at what hour that fellow we met on the packet was to show us those horses he spoke of?"

"At four," said Mr. Kennyfeck, with a half-sigh of resignation; "but you'll have ample time for that. I shall only ask you to attend at the Judges' chambers after our consultation."

"Well, you are really intolerable!" cried his wife. "Why cannot you and Jones, and the rest of you, do all this tiresome nonsense, and leave Mr. Cashel to us? I want to bring him out to visit two or three people; and the girls have been planning a canter in the Park."

"The canter, by all means," said Cashel. "I'm sure, my dear Mr. Kennyfeck, you'll do everything far better without me. I have no head for anything like business; and so pray, let me accompany the riding party."

"The attendance at the Master's is peremptory," sighed the attorney "there is no deferring that; and as to the mortgages, the funds are falling every hour. I should seriously advise selling out at once."

"Well, sell out, in Heaven's name. Do all and anything you like, and I promise my most unqualified satisfaction at the result."

"There, now," interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck, authoritatively; "don't worry any more, you see how tiresome you are!"

And poor Mr. Kennyfeck seemed to see and feel it too; for he hung his head, and sipped his tea in silence.

"To-day we dine alone, Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "but to-morrow I will try to show you some of the Dublin notorieties; at least, such as are to be had in the season. On Friday we plan a little country party into Wicklow; and I have promised to keep Saturday free, if the Blackenburgs want us."

"What shall we say, then, about Tubber-beg, Mr. Cashel?" said Kennyfeck, withdrawing him into a window-recess. "We ought to give the answer at once."

"Faith! I forgot all about it," said Cashel. "Is that the fishery you told me of?"

"Oh, no!" sighed the disconsolate man of law. "It's the farm on the terminable lease, at present held by Hugh Corrigan; he asks for a renewal."

"Well, let him have it," said Cashel, bluntly, while his eyes were turned towards the fire, where the two sisters, with arms entwined, stood in the most graceful of attitudes.

"Yes, but have you considered the matter maturely?" rejoined Kennyfeck, laying his hand on Cashel's arm. "Have you taken into account that he only pays eight and sevenpence per acre—the Irish acre, too; and that a considerable part of that land adjoining the Boat Quay is let, as building plots, for two and sixpence a foot?"

"A devilish pretty foot it is, too," murmured Cashel, musingly.

"Eh! what?" exclaimed Kennyfeck, perfectly mystified at this response.

"Oh! I meant that I agreed with you," rejoined the young man, reddening, and endeavouring to appear deeply interested. "I quite coincide with your views, Sir."

Kennyfeck seemed surprised at this, for he had not, to his knowledge, ventured on any opinion.

"Perhaps," said he, taking breath for a last effort, "if you'd kindly look at the map of the estate, and just see where this farm trenches on your own limits, you could judge better about the propriety of the renewal."

"Oh, with pleasure!" exclaimed Cashel, while he suffered himself to be led into the study, his face exhibiting very indifferent signs of satisfaction.

"Shall we assist in the consultation, Mr. Cashel?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, smiling in reply to his reluctant look at leaving.

"Oh, by all means!" cried he, enthusiastically; "do come, and give me your advice. Pray, come."

"Come, girls," said the mother, "although I perceive Mr. Kennyfeck is terribly shocked at the bare thought of our intrusion; but be of good courage, we only accompany Mr. Cashel to save him from any long imprisonment." And so she moved majestically forward, her daughters following her.

An alchemist would probably have received company in his laboratory, or a hermit admitted a jovial party in his cell, with less of constraint and dissatisfaction than did Mr. Kennyfeck watch the approach of his wife and daughters to the sanctum of his study.

Save at rare intervals, when a disconsolate widow had come to resolve a question of administration, or a no less forlorn damsel had entered to consult upon an action for "breach of promise," St. Kevin himself had never been less exposed to female intervention. It needed then all his reverence and fear of Mrs. Kennyfeck to sustain the shock to his feelings, as he saw her seat herself in his office-chair, and look around with the air of command that he alone used to exhibit in these regions.

"Now for this same map, Mr. Kennyfeck, and let us hear the question for which this Privy Council has been convened."

"This is the map," said Mr. Kennyfeck, unfolding a large scroll, "and I believe a single glance will enable Mr. Cashel to perceive that some little deliberation would be advisable before continuing in possession a tenant whose holding completely destroys the best feature of the demesne. This red line here is your boundary towards the Limerick road; here, stands the house, which, from the first, was a great mistake. It is built in a hollow without a particle of view; whereas, had it been placed here, where this cross is marked, the prospect would have extended over the whole of Scariff Bay, and by the west, down to Killaloe."

"Well, what's to prevent our building it there yet?" interrupted Cashel. "I think it would be rare fun building a house, at least if I may judge from all the amusement I've had in constructing one of leaves and buffalo-hides, in the Prairies."

Mrs. Kennyfeck and her eldest daughter smiled their blandest approbation, while Olivia murmured in her sister's ear, "Oh dear, he is so very natural, isn't he?"

"That will be a point for ulterior consideration," said Mr. Kennyfeck, who saw the danger of at all wandering from the topic in hand. "Give me your attention now for one moment, Mr. Cashel. Another inconvenience in the situation of the present house is, that it stands scarcely a thousand yards from this red and yellow line here."

"Well, what is that?" inquired Cashel, who already began to feel interested in the localities.

"This—and pray observe it well, Sir—this red and yellow line, enclosing a tract which borders on the Shannon, and runs, as you may remark, into the very heart of the demesne, this is Tubber-beg, the farm in question; not only encroaching upon your limits, but actually cutting you off from the river, at least, your access is limited to a very circuitous road, and which opens upon a very shallow part of the stream."

"And who or what is this tenant?" asked Cashel.

"His name is Corrigan, a gentleman by birth, but of a very limited fortune; he is now an old man, upwards of seventy, I understand."

"And how came it that he ever obtained possession of a tract so cir-

cumstanced, marring, as you most justly observe, the whole character of the demesne?"

"That would be a long story, Sir—enough, if I mention that his ancestors were the ancient owners of the entire estate, which was lost by an act of confiscation in the year forty-five; some extenuating circumstances, however, induced the Government to confer upon a younger branch of the family a lease of this small tract called Tubber-beg, to distinguish it from Tubbermore, the larger portion, and this lease it is whose expiration, in a few years, induces the present query."

"Has Mr. Corrigan children?"

"No; his only child, a daughter, is dead, but a granddaughter lives now with the old man."

"Then what is it he asks? Is it a renewal of the lease, on the former terms?"

"Why not precisely. I believe he would be willing to pay more."

"That's not what I mean," replied Cashel, reddening; "I ask, what terms as to time, he seeks for. Would it content him to have the land for his own life?"

"Mr. Kennyfeck, you are really very culpable to leave Mr. Cashel to the decision of matters of this kind—matters in which his kindliness of heart and inexperience will always betray him into a forgetfulness of his own interest. What has Mr. Cashel to think about this old creature's ancestors, who were rebels, it appears, or his daughter, or his granddaughter? Here is a simple question of a farm, which actually makes the demesne worthless, and which, by a singular piece of good fortune, is in Mr. Cashel's power to secure."

"This is a very correct view, doubtless," said her meek husband, submissively, "but we should also remember——"

"We have nothing to remember," interrupted Mrs. Kennyfeck, stoutly; "nothing, save his interests, who, as I have observed, is of too generous a nature to be trusted with such matters."

"Is there no other farm—have we nothing on the property he'd like as well as this?" asked Cashel.

"I fear not. The attachment to a place inhabited for centuries by his ancestry ——"

"By his fiddlestick," struck in Mrs. Kennyfeck; "two and sixpence an acre difference would be all the necessary compensation. Mr. Kennyfeck, how can you trifle in this manner, when you see how it will injure the demesne?"

"Oh, ruin it utterly!" exclaimed Miss Kennyfeck.

"It completely cuts off the beautiful river and those dear islands," said Olivia.

"So it does," said Cashel, musing.

"I wonder are they wooded? I declare I believe they are. Papa, are these little scrubby things meant to represent trees?"

"Oaks and chesnut-trees," responded Mr. Kennyfeck, gravely.

"Oh, how I should love a cottage on that island—a real Swiss cottage, with its carved galleries, and deep-eaved roof. Who owns these delicious islands?"

"Mr. Cashel, my dear," said papa, still bent on examining the map.

"Do I, indeed!" cried Roland, in an ecstasy; "then you shall have your wish, Miss Kennyfeck. I promise you the prettiest Swiss cottage that your own taste can devise."

"Oh dear, oh pray forgive me."

"Oh, Mr. Roland Cashel, don't think of such a thing! Olivia was merely speaking at random. How silly, child, you are to talk that way."

"Really, mamma, I had not the slightest suspicion—I wouldn't for the world have said anything if I thought——"

"Of course not, dear, but pray be guarded. Indeed, I own I never did hear you make a lapse of the kind before; but you see, Mr. Cashel, you have really made us forget that we were strangers but yesterday, and you are paying the penalty of your own exceeding kindness. Forget, then, I beseech you, this first transgression."

"I shall assuredly keep my promise, Madam," said Cashel, proudly; "and I have only to hope Miss Kennyfeck will not offend me by declining so very humble a present. Now, Sir, for our worthy friend Mr. Corrigan."

"Too fast, a great deal too fast, love," whispered the elder sister in the ear of the younger, and who, to the credit of her tact and ingenuity be it spoken, only gave the most heavenly smile in reply.

"I really am puzzled, Sir, what advice to give," said the attorney, musing.

"I have no difficulties of this sentimental kind," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a glance of profound depreciation towards her husband; "and I beg Mr. Cashel to remember that the opportunity now offered will possibly never occur again. If the old man is to retain his farm, of course Mr. Cashel would not think of building a new mansion, which must be ill-circumstanced, from what I can hear of the present house. It is equally certain that he would not reside in that."

"Is it so very bad?" ashed Cashel, smiling.

"It was ill-planned originally, added to in, if possible, worse taste, and then suffered to fall into ruin. It is now something more than eighty years since it saw any other inhabitant than a care-taker."

"Well, the picture is certainly not seductive. I rather opine that the

best thing we can do, is to throw this old rumbling concern down, at all events; and now once more—what shall we do with Mr. Corrigan?"

"I should advise you not giving any reply before you visit the property yourself. All business matters will be completed here, I trust, by Saturday. What, then, if we go over on Monday to Tubbermore?"

"Agreed. I have a kind of anxiety to look at the place; indeed, a mere glance would decide me if I ever care to return to it again."

"Then, I perceive, our counsel is of no avail here," said Mrs. Kennyfeck rising, with a very ill-concealed chagrin.

"Nay, Madam, don't say so. You never got so far as to give it," cried Cashel.

"Oh, yes, you forget that I said it would be absurd to hesitate about resuming possession."

"Unquestionably," echoed Miss Kennyfeck. "It is merely to indulge an old man's caprice at the cost of your own comfort and convenience."

"But he may cling to the spot, sister dear," said Olivia, in an accent only loud enough to be audible by Cashel.

"You are right," said Roland in her ear, with a look that spoke his approval far more eloquently.

Although Miss Kennyfeck had heard nothing that passed, her quickness detected the looks of intelligence that were so speedily interchanged, and as she left the room, she took occasion to whisper, "Do take advice, dear there is no keeping up a pace like that."

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

#### Bravo, Toro

As it chanced that many of Mr. Kennyfeck's clients were western gentlemen, whose tastes have an unequivocal tendency to all matters relating to horse-flesh, his stable was not less choicely furnished than his cellar; for besides being always able to command the shrewdest judgments when he decided to make a purchase, many an outstanding balance of long duration, many a debt significantly pencilled "doubtful" or "bad," in his note-book, was cleared off by some tall, sinewy steeplechaser from Galway, or some redoubted performer with the "Blazers."

So well known was this fact that several needed no other standard of a

neighbour's circumstances, than whether he had contributed or not to the Kennyfeck stud. This brief explanation we have been induced to make, to account for the sporting character of a stable whose proprietor never was once seen in the saddle. Far otherwise the ladies of the house; the mother and daughters, but in particular the elder, rode with all the native grace of Galway; and as they were invariably well mounted, and their grooms the smartest and best appointed, their "turn-out" was the admiration of the capital.

It was in vain that the English officials at the Castle, whose superlative tastes were wont to overshadow mere Irish pretension, endeavoured to compete with these noted equestrians. Secretaries' wives and Chamberlains' daughters, however they might domineer in other matters, were here, at least, surpassed, and it was a conceded fact, that the Kennyfecks rode better, dressed better, and looked better on horseback, than any other girls in the country. If all the critics as to horsemanship pronounced the elder unequivocally the superior rider, mere admirers of gracefulness preferred the younger sister, who, less courageous and self-possessed, invested her skill with a certain character of timidity that increased the interest her appearance excited.

They never rode out without an immense *cortége* of followers, every well-looking and well-mounted man about town deeming it his *devoir* to join this party, just as the box of the reigning belle at the Opera is besieged by assiduous visitors. The very being seen in this train was a kind of brevet promotion in fashionable esteem, to which each newly-arrived cornet aspired, and thus the party usually presented a group of brilliant uniforms and dancing plumes, that rivalled in brilliancy, and far excelled in amusement, the staff of the Viceroy himself.

It would be unfair to suppose that, with all their natural innocence and artlessness, they were entirely ignorant of the sway they thus exercised; indeed, such a degree of modesty would have trenched upon the incredulous, for how could they doubt what commanders of the forces and deputy-assistant-adjutants assured them, still less question the veracity of a prince royal, who positively asserted that they "rode better than Quentin's daughter."

It was thus a source of no small excitement among the mounted loungers of the capital, when the Kennyfecks issued forth on horseback, and not, as usual, making the tour of the "Square" to collect their forces, they rode at once down Grafton-street, accompanied by a single cavalier.

"Who have the Kennyfeck girls got with them?" said a thin-waisted looking Aide-de-camp to a lanky, well-whiskered fellow in a dragoon undress, at the Castle Gate.

"He is new to me—never saw him before.—I say, Lucas, who is that tall fellow on Kennyfeck's brown horse—do you know him?"

"Don't know—can't say," drawled out a very diminutive Hussar Cornet.

"He has a look of Merrington," said another, joining the party.

"Not a bit of it; he's much larger. I shouldn't wonder if he's one of the Esterhazys they've caught. There is one of them over here—a Paul or a Nicholas, of the younger branch;—but here's Linton, he'll tell us, if any man can."

This speech was addressed to a very dapper, well-dressed man of about thirty, mounted on a small thorough-bred pony, whose splashed and heaving flanks bespoke a hasty ride.

"I say, Tom, you met the Kennyfecks—who was that with them?"

"Don't you know him, my Lord?" said a sharp ringing voice, "that's our newly-arrived millionnaire—Roland Cashel, our Tipperary Crœsus;—the man with I won't say how many hundred thousands a year, and millions in bank besides."

"The devil it is—a good-looking fellow, too."

"Spooney, I should say," drawled out the Hussar, caressing his moustache.

"One needn't be as smart a fellow as you, Wheeler, with forty thousand a year," said Linton, with a sly glance at the others.

"You don't suppose, Tom," said the former speaker, "that the Kennyfecks have any designs in that quarter—egad! that would be rather aspiring eh?"

"Very unwise in us to permit it, my Lord," said Linton, in a low tone. "That's a dish will bear carving, and let every one have his share."

My Lord laughed with a low cunning laugh at the suggestion, and nodded an easy assent.

Meanwhile the Kennyfecks rode slowly on, and crossing Essex Bridge continued their way at a foot pace towards the Park, passing in front of the Four Courts, where a very large knot of idlers uncovered their heads in polite salutation as they went.

"That's Kennyfeck's newly-discovered client," cried one; "a great card, if they can only secure him for one of the girls."

"I say, did you remark how the eldest had him engaged? She never noticed any of us."

"I back Olivia," said another; "she's a quiet one, but devilish sly for all that."

"Depend upon it," interposed an older speaker, "the fellow is up to all that sort of thing."

"Jones met him at dinner yesterday at Kennyfecks, and says he is a re-

gular soft one, and if the girls don't run an opposition to each other, one is sure to win."

"Why not toss up for him, then? that would be fairer."

"Ay, and more sisterly, too," said the elder speaker. "Jones would be right glad to claim the beaten horse."

"Jones, indeed—I can tell you they detest Jones," said a young fellow.

"They told you so, eh, Hammond?" said another; while a very hearty laugh at the discomfited youth broke from the remainder.

And now to follow our mounted friends, who, having reached the Park, continued still at a walking pace to thread the grassy paths that led through that pleasant tract; now, hid amid the shade of ancient thorn-trees, now, gaining the open expanse of plain with its bold background of blue mountains.

From the evident attention bestowed by the two sisters, it was clear that Cashel was narrating something of interest, for he spoke of an event which had happened to himself in his Prairie life; and this alone, independent of all else, was enough to make the theme amusing.

"Does this convey any idea of a Prairie, Mr. Cashel?" said Miss Kennyfeck, as they emerged from a grove of beech-trees, and came upon the wide and stretching plain, so well known to Dubliners as the Fifteen Acres, but which is, in reality, much greater in extent. "I have always fancied this great grassy expanse must be like a Prairie."

"About as like as yonder cattle to a herd of wild buffaloes," replied Roland, smiling.

"Then what is a Prairie like? Do tell us," said Olivia, eagerly.

"I can scarcely do so, nor, if I were a painter, do I suppose that I could make a picture of one, because it is less the presence than the total absence of all features of landscape that constitutes the wild and lonely solitude of a Prairie. But fancy a great plain—gently—very gently undulating—not a tree, not a shrub, not a stream to break the dreary uniformity—sometimes, but even that rarely, a little muddy pond of rain-water, stagnant and yellow, is met with, but only seen soon after heavy showers, for the hot sun rapidly absorbs it. The only vegetation, a short yellowed burnt-up grass—not a wild flower or a daisy, if you travelled hundreds of hundreds of miles. On you go, days and days, but the scene never changes. Large cloud shadows rest upon the barren expanse, and move slowly and sluggishly away, or sometimes a sharp and pelting shower is borne along, traversing hundreds of miles in its course, but these are the only traits of motion in the death-like stillness At last, perhaps after weeks of wandering, you descry, a long way off, some dark objects dotting the surface, these are buffaloes; or at sunset, when the thin atmosphere makes everything sharp and distinct, some black spectral shapes

seem to glide between you and the red twilight, these are Indian hunters, seen miles off, and by some strange law of nature they are presented to the vision when far, far beyond the range of sight. Such strange apparitions, the consequence of refraction, have led to the most absurd superstitions, and all the stories the Germans tell you of their wild huntsmen are nothing to the tales every trapper can recount of war parties seen in the air, and tribes of red men in pursuit of deer and buffaloes, through the clear sky of an autumn evening."

"And have you yourself met with these wild children of the desert?" said Olivia; "have you ever been amongst them?"

"Somewhat longer than I fancied," replied Roland, smiling. "I was a prisoner once with the Camanches."

"Oh, let us hear all about it—how did it happen?" cried both together.

"It happened absurdly enough, at least you will say so, when I tell you; but to a Prairie-hunter the adventure would seem nothing singular. It chanced that some years ago I made one of a hunting party into the Rocky Mountains, and finally as far as Pueblo Santo, the last station before entering the hunting-grounds of the Camanches, a very fierce tribe, and one with whom all the American traders have failed to establish any relations of friendship or commerce. They care nothing for the inventions of civilisation, and, unlike all other Indians, prefer their own bows and arrows to fire-arms.

"We had been now four days within their boundary, and yet never met one of the tribe. Some averred that they always learned by the scouts whenever any invasion took place, and retired till they were in sufficient force to pour down and crush the intruders. Others, who proved better informed, said that they were hunting in a remote tract, several days' journey distant. We were doubly disappointed, for besides not seeing the Camanches, for which we had a great curiosity, we did not discover any game. The two or three trails we followed led to nothing, nor could a hoof-track be seen for miles and miles of Prairie. In this state of discomfiture, we were sitting one evening around our fires, and debating with ourselves whether to turn back or go on, when, the dispute waxing warm between those of different opinions, I, who hated all disagreements of the kind, slipped quietly away, and throwing the bridle on my horse, I set out for a solitary ramble over the Prairie.

"I have the whole scene before me this instant, the solemn desolation of that dreary track! for scarcely had I gone a mile over what seemed a perfectly level plain, when the swelling inequalities of the ground shut out the watch-fires of my companions, and now there was nothing to be seen but the vast expanse of land and sky, each coloured with the same dull leaden tint

of coming night; no horizon was visible, not a star appeared, and in the midst of this grey monotony, a stillness prevailed that smote the heart with something more appalling than mere fear. No storm that ever I listened to at sea, not the loudest thunder that ever crashed, or the heaviest sea that ever broke upon a leeward shore at midnight, ever chilled my blood like that terrible stillness. I thought that the dreadful roll of an avalanche, or the heaving ground-swell of an earthquake had been easier to bear. I believe I actually prayed for something like sound to relieve the horrible tension of my nerves, when, just as if my wish was heard, a low booming sound, like the sea within a rocky cavern, came borne along on the night wind. Then it lulled again, and after a time grew louder. This happened two or three times, so that, half suspecting some self-delusion, I stopped my ears, and then on removing my hands, I heard the noise increasing till it swelled into one dull roaring sound, that made the very air vibrate. I thought it must be an earthquake, of which it is said many occur in these regions, but, from the dreary uniformity, leave no trace behind.

"I resolved to regain my companions at once; danger is always easier to confront in company, and so I turned my horse's head to go back. The noise was now deafening, and so stunning that the very ground seemed to give it forth. My poor horse became terrified, his flanks heaved, and he laboured in his stride as if overcome by fatigue. This again induced me to suspect an earthquake, for I knew by what singular instincts animals are apprised of its approach. I therefore gave him the spur, and urged him on with every effort, when suddenly he made a tremendous bound to one side, and set off with the speed of a racer. Stretched to his fullest stride, I was perfectly powerless to restrain him; meanwhile, the loud thundering sounds filled the entire air—more deafening than the greatest artillery; the crashing uproar smote my ears, and made my brain ring with the vibration, and then suddenly the whole plain grew dark behind and at either side of me the shadow swept on and on, nearer and nearer, as the sounds increased, till the black surface seemed, as it were, about to close around me; and now I perceived that the great Prairie, far as my eyes could stretch, was covered by a herd of wild buffaloes: struck by some sudden terror, they had taken what is called 'the Stampedo,' and set out at full speed. In an instant they were around me on every side—a great moving sea of dark-backed monsters—roaring in terrible uproar, and tossing their savage heads wildly to and fro, in all the paroxysm of terror. To return, or even to extricate myself, was impossible; the dense mass pressed like a wall at either side of me, and I was borne along in the midst of the heaving herd, without the slightest hope of rescue. I cannot—you would not ask me, if even I could—recal the terrors of that dreadful night, which in its dark hours compassed

the agonies of years. Until the moon got up, I hoped that the herd might pass on, and at last leave me at liberty behind; but when she rose, and I looked back, I saw the dark sea of hides, as if covering the whole wide Prairie, while the deep thunder from afar mingled with the louder bellowing of the herd around me.

"I suppose my reeling brain became maddened by the excitement; for even yet, when by any accident I suffer slight illness, terrible fancies of that dreadful scene come back; and I have been told that, in my wild cries and shouts, I seem encouraging and urging on the infuriate herd, and by my gestures appearing to control and direct their headlong course. Had it been possible, I believe I should have thrown myself to the earth and sought death at once, even in this dreadful form, than live to die the thousand deaths of agony that night inflicted; but this could not be, and so, as day broke, I was still carried on, not, indeed, with the same speed as before; weariness weighed on the vast moving mass, but the pressure of those behind still drove them onward. I thought the long hours of darkness were terrible; and the appalling gloom of night added tortures to my sufferings; but the glare of daylight, the burning sun, and the clouds of dust, were still worse. I remember, too, when exhaustion had nearly spent my last frail energy, and when my powerless hands, letting fall the bridle, dropped heavily to my side, that the herd suddenly halted—halted, as if arrested by some gigantic hand; and then the pressure became so dreadful that my bones seemed almost bursting from my flesh, and I screamed aloud in my agony. After this, I remember little else. The other events of that terrible ride are like the shadowy spectres of a magic lantern; vague memories of sufferings, pangs that even yet chill my blood, steal over me, but unconnected and incoherent, so that when, as I afterwards heard, the herd dashed into the Camanche encampment, I have no recollection of anything, except the terror-struck faces of the red men, as they bent before me, and seemed to worship me as a deity. Yes, this terrible tribe, who had scarcely ever been known to spare a white man, not only did not injure, but they treated me with the tenderest care and attention. A singular incident had favoured me: one of the wise men had foretold some days before that a herd of wild buffaloes, sent by their god, Anadongu, would speedily appear, and rescue the tribe from the horrors of impending starvation. The prediction was possibly based upon some optical delusion, like that I have mentioned. Whatever its origin, the accomplishment was hailed with ecstasy; and I myself, a poor, almost dying creature, stained with blood, crushed and speechless, was regarded as their deliverer and preserver."

"How long did you remain amongst them?" cried Miss Kennyfeck.

"And how did you escape?" asked Olivia.

"Were they always equally kind?"

"Were you sorry to leave them?" were the questions rapidly poured in ere Cashel could reply to any one of them.

"I have often heard," said Miss Kennyfeck, "that the greater mental ability of the white man is certain to secure him an ascendancy over the minds of savage tribes, and that, if he be spared at first, he is sure in the end to become their chief."

"I believe they actually worship any display of intelligence above their own," said Olivia.

"These are exaggerated accounts," said Cashel, smiling. "Marriage is among savage as among civilised nations, a great stepping-stone to eminence. When a white man is allied with a princess——"

"Oh, how shocking!" cried both together. "I'm sure no person, anything akin to a gentleman, could dream of such a thing," said Miss Kennyfeck.

"It happens now and then, notwithstanding," said Cashel, with a most provoking gravity.

While the sisters would have been well pleased had Cashel's personal revelations continued on this theme, they did not venture to explore so dangerous a path, and were both silent. Roland, too, appeared buried in some recollection of the past, for he rode on for some time without speaking—a preoccupation on his part which seemed in no wise agreeable to his fair companions.

"There are the MacFarlines, Livy," said Miss Kennyfeck; "and Linton, and Lord Charles, and the rest of them. I declare, I believe they see us, and are coming this way."

"What a bore! Is there no means of escape? Mr. Cashel, pray invent one."

"I beg pardon. What was it you said? I have been dreaming for the last three minutes."

"Pleasant dreams I'm certain they were," said Miss Kennyfeck, with a very significant smile; "evoked, doubtless, by some little memory of your life among the Camanches."

Cashel started and grew red, while his astonishment rendered him speechless.

"Here they come; how provoking," exclaimed Livy.

"Who are coming?"

"Some friends of ours, who, strange to say, have the misfortune to be peculiarly disagreeable to my sister Livy to-day, although I have certainly seen Lord Charles contrive to make his company less distasteful at other times."

"Oh, my dear Caroline, you know perfectly well——" broke in Olivia, with a tone of unfeigned reproach.

"Let us ride for it, then," said Miss Kennyfeck, without permitting her to finish. "Now, Mr. Cashel, a canter—a gallop, if you will."

"Quite ready," said Cashel, his animation at once returning at the bare mention; and away they set, down a gentle slope with wooded sides, then they gained another grassy plain, skirted with trees, at the end of which a small picturesque cottage stood, the residence of a ranger; passing this, they arrived at a thick wood, and then slackened their pace, as all pursuit might be deemed fruitless. This portion of the Park, unlike the rest, seemed devoted to various experiments in agriculture and gardening. Here were little enclosed plots of Indian corn and Swedish turnips; here, small plantations of fruit-trees. Each succeeding Secretary seemed to have left behind him some trace of his own favourite system for the improvement of Ireland, and one might recal the names of long departed officials in little experimental specimens of drainage, or fencing, or drill culture, around. Less interested by these patchwork devices, Cashel stood gazing on a beautiful white bull, who grazed in a little paddock carefully fenced by a strong oak paling. Although of a small breed, he was a perfect specimen of strength and proportion, his massive and muscular neck and powerful loins contrasting with the lanky and tendonous form of the wild animal of the Prairies.

The girls had not remarked that Roland, beckoning to his servant, despatched him at full speed on an errand, for each was loitering about, amusing herself with some object of the scene.

"What has fascinated you, yonder?" said Miss Kennyfeck, riding up to where Roland still stood in wondering admiration at the noble animal.

"The handsomest bull I ever saw!" cried he, in all the ecstasy of a "Torero;" "who ever beheld such a magnificent fellow? Mark the breadth of his chest, and the immense fore-arm. See how he lashes his tail about. No need of bandilleros to rouse your temper."

"Is there no danger of the creature springing over the paling?" said Olivia, drawing closer to Cashel, and looking at him with a most trustful dependence.

Alas for Roland's gallantry, he answered the words and not the glance that accompanied them.

"No; he'd never think of it, if not excited to some excess of passion. I'd not answer for his patience, or our safety either, if really provoked. See! is not that glorious?" This burst of enthusiasm was called forth by the bull, seized with some sudden caprice, taking a circuit of the paddock at full speed his head now raised majestically aloft, and now bent to the

ground; he snatched some tufts of the grass as he went, and flung them from him in wild sport.

"Bravo, toro!" cried Cashel, in all the excitement of delight and admiration. "Viva el toro!" shouted he; "not a 'Corrida' of the Old World or the New ever saw a braver beast."

Whether in compliance with his humour, or that she really caught up the enthusiasm from Cashel, Miss Kennyfeck joined in all his admiration, and seemed to watch the playful pranks of the great animal with delight.

"How you would enjoy a real 'toro machia,'" said Cashel, as he turned towards her, and felt that she was far handsomer than he had ever believed before. Indeed, the heightened colour of exercise, and the flashing brilliancy of her eyes, made her seem so without the additional charm derived from sympathy with his humour.

"I should delight in it," cried she, with enthusiasm. "Oh, if I could but see one!"

Cashel drew nearer as she spoke, his dark and piercing eyes fixed with a look of steadfast admiration, when in a low half whisper he said, "Would you really like it? Have these wild and desperate games an attraction for you?"

"Oh, do not ask me," said she, in the same low voice. "Why should I confess a wish for that which never can be."

"How can you say that? Have not far greater, and less likely things happened to almost all of us? Think of me, for instance. Travelling with the Gambusinos a few months back, and now—now *your* companion here."

If there was not a great deal in the mere words themselves, there was enough in the look of the speaker to make them deeply felt. How much further Cashel might have adventured, and with what additional speculations invested the future, is not for us to say, for, just then, his groom rode up at speed, holding in his hand a great coil of rope, to one end of which a small round ball of wood was fastened.

"What is that for, Mr. Cashel?" inquired both the girls together, as they saw him adjust the coils lightly on his left arm, and poise the ball in his right hand.

"Cannot you guess what it means?" said Roland, smiling. "Have you never heard of a lasso?"

"A lasso!" exclaimed both in amazement. "You surely could never intend——"

"You shall see," cried he, as he made three or four casts with the rope in the air, and caught up the loops again with astonishing dexterity. "Now only promise me not to be afraid, nor, if possible, let a cry escape, and I'll

show you sol a rare sport. Just take your places here; the horses will stand perfectly quiet." Without waiting for a reply, he ordered the grooms to remain at either side of the young ladies, and then dismounting, he forced open the lock and led his horse into the paddock. This done, he leisurely closed the gate and mounted, every motion being as free from haste and excitement as if made upon the high road. As for the bull, at the noise of the gate on its hinges he lifted up his head, but as it were indifferent to the cause, he resumed his grazing attitude the moment after.

Cashel's first care seemed to be to reconnoitre the ground, for at a slow walk he traversed the space in various directions, carefully examining the footing and watching for any accidental circumstance that might vary the surface. He then rode up to the paling, where in unfeigned terror the two girls sat, silently following him in every motion.

"Now, remember," said he, smiling, "no fears, no terrors. If you were to make me nervous, I should probably miss my cast, and the disgrace, not to speak of anything else, would be dreadful."

"Oh! we'll behave very well," said Miss Kennyfeck, trying to assume a composure that her pale cheek and compressed lips very ill corroborated. As for Olivia, too terrified for words, she merely looked at him, while the tears rolled heavily down her cheeks.

"Now, to see if my hand has not forgot its cunning!" said Roland, as he pressed his horse's flanks, and pushing into a half-gallop, made a circuit around the bull. The scene was a picturesque as well as an exciting one. The mettlesome horse, on which the rider sat with consummate ease, in his right hand the loose coils of the lasso, with which to accustom his horse he flourished and shook around the head and ears of the animal as he went; while, with head bent down, and the strong neck slightly retracted, the bull seemed to watch him as he passed, and at length, slowly turning, continued to fix his eyes upon the daring intruder. Gradually narrowing his circle, Cashel was cautiously approaching within a suitable distance for the cast, when the bull, as it were losing patience, gave one short hoarse cry and made at him, so sudden the spring, and so infuriate the action, that a scream, from both the sisters together, showed how near the danger must have appeared. Roland, however, had foreseen from the attitude of the beast what was coming, and by a rapid wheel escaped the charge, and passed close beside the creature's flank unharmed. Twice or thrice the same manœuvre occurred with the same result, and although the horse was terrified to that degree that his sides were one sheet of foam, the control of the rider was perfect, and his every gesture bespoke ease and confidence.

Suddenly the bull stopped, and retiring till his haunches touched the paling, he seemed surveying the field, and contemplating another and more

successful mode of attack. The concentrated passion of the creature's attitude at this moment was very fine, as with red eyeballs and frothed lips he stood, slowly and in heavy strokes lashing his flanks with his long tail.

"Is he tired?" said Miss Kennyfeck, as Cashel stood close to the paling, and breathed his horse, for what he foresaw might be a sharp encounter.

"No! far from it," answered Roland; "the fellow has the cunning of an old 'Corridor;' you'll soon see him attack."

The words were not well uttered, when, with a low deep roar, the bull bounded forward, not in a straight line, however, but zig-zagging from left to right, and right to left, as if with the intention of pinning the horseman into a corner. The terrific springs of the great beast, and his still more terrific cries, appeared to paralyse the horse, who stood immovable, nor was it till the savage animal had approached within a few yards of him, that at last he reared up straight, and then, as if overcome by terror, dashed off at speed, the bull following.

The scene was now one of almost maddening excitement, for, although the speed of the horse far exceeded that of his pursuer, the bull, by taking a small circle, was rapidly gaining on him, and, before the third circuit of the field was made, was actually almost side by side. Roland saw all his danger; he knew well that the slightest swerve, a "single mistake," would be fatal; but he had been trained to peril, and this was not the first time he had played for life and won. It was then, just at the instant when the bull, narrowing his distance, was ready, by one bound, to drive his horns into the horse's flank, that the youth, suddenly reined up, and throwing the horse nearly on his haunches, suffered his pursuer to shoot ahead. The same instant, at least so it seemed, he rose in his stirrups, and winding the rope three or four times above his head, hurled it forth. Away went the floating coils through the air, and with a sharp snap, they caught the animal's forelegs in their fast embrace. Maddened by the restraint, he plunged forward, but ere he gained the ground, a dexterous pull of the lasso jerked the legs backwards, and the huge beast fell floundering to the earth. The stunning force seemed enough to have extinguished life, and he lay indeed motionless for a few seconds, when, by a mighty effort, he strove to burst his bonds. Roland, meanwhile, after a severe struggle to induce his horse to approach, abandoning the effort, sprang to the ground, and by three or four adroit turns of the lasso over the head and between the horns, completely fettered him, and at each fresh struggle passing new turns of the rope, he so bound him that the creature lay panting and powerless, his quivering sides and distended nostrils breathing the deep rage that possessed him.

"Ah! Mosquito mio"—the Toridor's usual pet name for a young bull

—"you were an easy victory after all, though I believe with a little more practice of the game I should only get off second best."

There was, if we must confess it, a certain little bit of boastfulness in the speech, the truth being, that the struggle, though brief, had been a sharp one, and so Cashel's air and look bespoke it, as he led his horse out of the paddock.

It would be a somewhat nice point—happily, it is not requisite to decide it—whether Roland was more flattered by the enthusiastic praise of the elder sister, or touched by the silent, but eloquent, look with which Olivia received him.

"What a splendid sight, what a noble achievement!" said Miss Kennyfeck; "how I thank you for thus giving me, as it were, a peep into Spain, and letting me feel the glorious enthusiasm a deed of heroism can inspire!"

"Are you certain you are not hurt?" whispered Olivia; "the creature's horns certainly grazed you. Oh dear! how terrible it was at one moment."

"Are you going to leave him in his toils?" said Miss Kennyfeck.

"Oh, certainly," replied Cashel, laughing; "I commit the pleasant office of liberating him to other hands." And so saying, he carelessly mounted his horse, while they pressed him with a hundred questions and inquiries about the late combat.

"I shall be amused to hear the reports that will be current to-morrow," said Miss Kennyfeck, "about this affair. I'm certain the truth will be the last to ooze out. My groom says that the creature belongs to the Lord Lieutenant, and if so, there will be no end to the stories."

Cashel did not seem as much impressed as the sisters expected at this announcement, nor at all aware that he had been constructively affronting the Vice-Majesty of the land, and so he chatted away in pleasant indifference while they continued their ride towards home.

## CHAPTER X.

THE COMING DINNER PARTY DISCUSSED.

How kindness all its spirit lends,
When we discuss our dearest friends,
Not meanly faults and follies hiding,
But frankly owning each backsliding,
Confessing with polite compassion,
"They're very bad, but still, the fashion."

THE MODE.

THE Kennyfecks were without strangers that day, and Cashel, who was now, as it were by unanimous election, received into the bosom of the family, enjoyed for the first time in his life a peep into the science of dinner-giving, in the discussions occasioned by the approaching banquet.

No sooner were they assembled around the drawing-room fire, than Mrs. Kennyfeck, whose whole soul was occupied by the one event, took occasion, as it were, by pure accident, to remember that they "were to have some people to-morrow." Now, the easy *nonchalance* of the reminiscence and the shortness of the invitation would seem to imply that it was merely one of those slight deviations from daily routine which adds two or three guests to the family table, and so, indeed, did it impress Cashel, who little knew that the dinner in question had been devised, planned, and arranged full three weeks before, and the company packed with a decree of care and selection that evinced all the importance of the event.

Time was when the Irish capital enjoyed, and justly, the highest reputation for all that constitutes social success, when around the dinner-tables of the city were met men of the highest order of intelligence, men pleased to exercise, without effort or display, all the charm of wit and eloquence, and to make society a brilliant reunion of those gifts which, in the wider sphere of active life, won fame and honours.

As the race of these bright conversers died out—for, alas! they belonged to a past era—their places were assumed by others of very dissimilar tastes Many educated at English universities brought back with them to Ireland the more reserved and cautious demeanour of the other country, and thus, if not by their influence, by their mere presence, threw a degree of constraint over the tone of society, which, in destroying its freedom, despoiled it of all its charm.

Fashion, that idol of an Englishman's heart, soon became an Irish deity

too, and it now grew the "ton" to be English, or at least what was supposed to be such, in dress and manner, in hours, accent, and demeanour. The attempt was never successful; the reserve and placidity which sit with gracefulness on the high-bred Englishman, was a stiff, uncourteous manner in the more cordial and volatile Irishman. His own demeanour was a tree that would not bear grafting, and the fruit lost all its raciness by the admixture.

The English officials at the Castle, the little staff of a Commander of the Forces, the newly-made Bishop, fresh from Oxford, even the officers of the last arrived dragoon regiment, became, by right of "accent," the types of manner and breeding in circles where, in the actual enjoyment of social qualities, they were manifestly beneath those over whom they held sway; however, they were stamped at the great metropolitan mint, and the competitors were deemed a mere depreciated currency which a few years more would cancel for ever.

Mrs. Kennyfeck, as a fashionable dinner-giver, of course selected her company from this more choice section; a fact which deserves to be recorded, to the credit of her hospitality; for it was a very rare occurrence, indeed, when she found herself invited by any of those distinguished personages who figured the oftenest at her own table. They thought, perhaps justly, that their condescension was sufficiently great to demand no further acknowledgment; and that, as virtue is said to be its own reward, theirs was abundantly exhibited in the frankness with which they ate Kennyfeck's venison, and drank his Burgundy, both of which were excellent.

Every one dined there, because they knew "they'd meet every one." A pretender in the world of fashion, unlike a pretender to monarchy, is sure to have the best company in his *salon*; and so, although you might have met many at the tables of the first men of the country, who were there by virtue of their talents or abilities, at Kennyfeck's the company was sure to be "select." They could not afford dilution, lest they should find themselves at ease!

"Olivia, pray take that newspaper from Mr. Kennyfeck, and let us hear who he has asked to dinner to-morrow," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, gracefully imitating an attitude of Lady Londonderry in the "Book of Beauty."

Mr. Kennyfeck heard the request, and started; his surprise had not been greater if the Chancellor had addressed him as "Tom." It was the first time in his life that an allusion had ever been made to the bare possibility of his inviting the company of a grand dinner; a prerogative he had never so much as dreamt of, and now he actually heard his wife refer to him, as if he were even a party to the deed.

"Invite! Mrs. Kennyfeck. I'm sure I never thought——"

"No matter what you thought," said his spouse, reddening at his stupidity. "I wanted to remember who are coming, that we may let Mr. Cashel learn something of our Dublin folk."

"Here's a list, Mamma," said Olivia; "and I believe there are no apologies. Shall I read it?"

"Do so, child," said she, but evidently out of humour that the delightful little display of indifference and ignorance should not have succeeded better.

"Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline, of course!" cried Miss Kennyfeck; "ain't they first?"

"They are," replied her sister.

"Sir Andrew, Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, "is a very distinguished officer, a K.C.B., and something else besides. He was in all the Duke's battles in Spain; a most gallant officer, but a little rough in manner —Scotch, you know. Lady Janet was sister to Lord——What is that Lord, Caroline? I always forget."

"Dumkeeran, Mamma."

"Yes, that's it. She is a charming person, but very proud; very proud indeed—will not visit with the Dublin people; with us, I must say, I have never seen anything like her kindness; we are absolutely like sisters. Go on, Olivia."

"Lord Charles Frobisher."

"And the Honourable Elliot St. John," chimed in her sister; "Damon and Pythias, where a dinner is concerned." This was said in a whisper.

"They are the Aides-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Charles is younger brother to the Duke of Derwent; quite the man of fashion, and so amusing! Oh, he's delightful!"

"Charming!" duetted the two sisters.

"Mr. St. John is a very nice person, too; but one never knows him like Lord Charles; he is more reserved. Olivia, however, says he has a great deal in him."

"Oh, Mamma! I'm sure I don't know; I only thought him much more conversable than he gets credit for."

"Well, I meant no more," said her mother, who did not fancy the gathering gloom on Cashel's face at this allusion; "read on again, child."

"Lord Chief Justice Malone."

"Oh, Mr. Kennyfeck," said she, playfully, "this is *your* doing; I suspected, from your confusion a while ago, what you were at." Then, turning to Roland, she said: "He is always playing us this trick, Mr. Cashel; whenever we have a few friends together, he will insist upon inviting some of his old bar cronies!"

A deep groan from Mr. Kennyfeck at the terrible profanity of thus styling the chief of the Common Pleas, made every one start; but even this, like skilful tactician, Mrs. Kennyfeck turned to her own advantage.

"Pray don't sigh that way. He is a most excellent person, a great lawyer, and, they say, must eventually have the peerage." She nodded to Olivia to proceed, who read on.

"The Attorney-General and Mrs. Knivett."

"Oh, really, Mr. Kennyfeck, this is pushing prerogative; don't you think so, Mr. Cashel? Not but you know the Attorney-General is a great personage in this poor country; he is member for—where is it?"

"Baldoyle, Mamma."

"Yes, Member for Baldoyle; and she was a Miss Gamett, of Red Gamett, in Antrim; a most respectable connexion; so I think we may forgive him. Yes, Mr. Kennyfeck, you are, at least, reprieved."

"Here come the Whites, Mamma. I suppose we may reckon on both, though she, as usual, sends her hopes and fears about being with us at dinner, but will be delighted to come in the evening."

"That apology is stereotyped," broke in Miss Kennyfeck, "as well as the little simpering speech she makes on entering the drawing-room. 'So you see, my dear Mrs. Kennyfeck, there is no resisting you. Colonel White assured me that your pleasant dinners always set him up for a month—he, he, he.'"

If Cashel had not laughed heartily at the lisping imitation, it is possible Mrs. Kennyfeck might have been displeased, but as the quiz "took," she showed no umbrage whatever.

"The Honourable Downie Meek, Under Secretary of State," read Olivia, with a little more of emphasis than on the last-mentioned names.

"A person you'll be charmed with, Mr. Cashel—so highly informed, so well bred, so perfectly habituated to move in the very highest circles," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, giving herself, as she spoke, certain graces of gesture, which she deemed illustrative of distinguished fashion.

"A cucumber dressed in oil," whispered Miss Kennyfeck, who showed more than once a degree of impatience at these eulogistic descriptions.

"The Dean of Drumcondera, your great favourite, Mamma."

"So he is, my dear. Now, Mr. Cashel, I shall insist upon you liking my Dean. I call him *my* Dean, because one day last spring——"

"Mrs. Biles wants to speak to you, Ma'am, for a minute," said the butler, from behind the chair; and, although the interruption was anything but pleasant, yet the summons must be obeyed, for Mrs. Biles was the housekeeper, and any approach to treating her with indifference or contempt on the eve of a great dinner would be about as impolitic as insult-

ing a general who was about to command in a great battle; so that Mrs. Kennyfeck rose to comply, not even venturing a word of complaint, lest the formidable functionary should hear of it, and take her revenge on the made dishes.

"Now for the Dean. Is Mamma out of hearing?" said Miss Kennyfeck, who rejoiced at the casual opportunity of a little portrait-painting in a different style. "Conceive a tall, pompous man, with large white features, and a high bald head with a conical top; a sharp, clear, but unpleasant voice, always uttering grave nonsense, or sublime absurdity. He was a brilliant light at Oxford, and came over to illumine our darkness, and if pedantry could only supply the deficiency in the potato crop, he would be a providence to the land. His affectation is to know everything, from chuck-farthing to conic sections, and so to diffuse his information as always to talk science to young ladies, and discuss the royal game of goose with Lords of the Treasury. His failures in these attempts at Admirable Crichtonism, would abash even confidence great as his, but that he is surrounded by a little staff of admirers, who fend off the sneers of the audience, and like buffers, they break the rude shocks of worldly collision. Socially, he is the tyrant of this capital; from having learning enough to be more than a match for those he encounters, and skill enough to give his paradoxes a mock air of authority, he usurps a degree of dictation and rule that makes society mere slavery. You'll meet him to-morrow evening, and you'll see if he does not know more of Mexico and Savannah life than you do. Take care, I say, that you venture not into the wilds of the Pampas, for you'll have his companionship, not as fellow-traveller, but as guide and instructor. As for myself, whenever I read in the papers of meetings to petition Parliament to repeal this or redress that, in the name of 'Justice to Ireland,' I ask, why does nobody pray for the recal of the Dean of Drumcondera?"

"Here's Mamma," whispered Olivia, as the drawing-room door opened.

"We've done the Dean, Mamma," said Miss Kennyfeck, with calm composure.

"Well, don't you feel that you love him already? Mr. Cashel, confess that you participate in all my raptures. Oh dear! I do so admire talent and genius," exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck, theatrically.

Cashel smiled, and muttered something unintelligible; and Olivia read on, but with a rapidity that showed the names required no special notice. "The Craufurds, the Smythes, Mrs. Felix Brown, Lady Emmeline Grove."

"Oh, that dear Lady Emmeline! a most gifted creature; she's the authoress of some sweet poems. She wrote that touching sonnet in the

Nobility's Gallery of Loveliness,' beginning, 'Twin Sister of the Evening Star.'—I'm sure you know it."

"I'm unfortunate enough never to have seen it," said Cashel.

"Well, you shall see the writer to-morrow evening; I must really take care that you are acquainted. People will tell you that she is affected, and takes airs of authorship; but remember her literary success—think of her contributions to the *Court Journal*."

"Those sweet flatteries of the nobility that Linton calls court-plaister, Mamma," said Miss Kennyfeck, laughing maliciously.

"Linton is very abusive," said her mother, tartly; "he never has a good word for any one."

"He used to be a pet of yours, Mamma," insinuated Olivia.

"So he was till he became so intimate with those atrocious Fothergills."

"Who is he?" said Cashel.

"He's a son of a Sir George Linton."

"That's one story, Mamma; but as nobody ever saw the aforesaid Sir George, the presumption is it may be incorrect. The last version is that he was found, like Moses, the discoverer being Lady Harriet Dropmore, who, with a humanity never to be forgotten—or forgiven," whispered Olivia, "for she has been often taunted with it—took care of the creature, and had it reared—nay, better again, she sent it to Rugby and to Cambridge, got it into Parliament for Elmwood, and has now made it Master of the Horse in Ireland."

"He is the most sarcastic person I ever met."

"It is such an easy talent," said Miss Kennyfeck; "the worst of wine makes capital vinegar."

"Then here follow a set of soldier people," said Olivia; "Hussars and Queen's Bays, and a Captain Tanker of the Royal Navy—oh, I remember, he has but one arm—and then the Pelertons and the Cuffes."

"Well, are we at the end of our muster-roll?"

"Yes, we have nearly reached the dregs of the cup. I see Mr. Knox Softly, and the Townleys!"

"Oh, the Townleys! Poor Mrs. Townley, with her yellow turban and red feathers, that Lord Dunbrock mistook for a *vol-au-vent* garnished with shrimps."

"Caroline!" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, reprovingly, for her daughter's sallies had more than once verged upon the exhaustion of her patience.

"We shall not weary you with any description of the 'refreshers,' Mr. Cashel."

"Pray who and what are they?" inquired Cashel.

"The 'refreshers' are that amiable but undervalued class in society who

are always asked for the evening when the other members of the family are invited to dine. They are the young lady and young gentleman class; the household with ten daughters, and a governess that sings like, anything but, Persiani. They are briefless barristers, with smart whiskers; and young men reading for the Church, with moustaches; infantry officers, old maids, fellows of college, and the gentleman who tells Irish stories."

"Caroline, I really must request——"

"But, Mamma, Mr. Cashel surely ought to learn the map of the country he is to live in."

"I am delighted to acquire my geography so pleasantly," cried Cashel. "Pray go on."

"I am bound over," said she, smiling; "Mamma is looking penknives at me, so I suppose I must stop. But as to these same 'refreshers,' you will easily distinguish them from the dinner company. The young ladies are always fresher in their white muslin; they walk about in gangs, and eat a prodigious deal of bread-and-butter at tea. Well, I have done, Mamma, though I'm sure I was not aware of my transgressings."

"I declare Mr. Kennyfeck is asleep again.—Mr. Kennyfeck, have the goodness to wake up and say who is to make the whist-table for Lady Blennerbore."

"Yes, my Lord," said Mr. Kennyfeck, waking up and rubbing his eyes, "we'll take a verdict for the plaintiff, leaving the points reserved."

A very general laugh here recalled him to himself, as with extreme confusion he continued, "I was so fatigued in the Rolls to-day. It was an argument relative to a trust, Mr. Cashel, which it is of great moment you should be relieved of."

"Oh, never trouble your head about it now, Sir," said Cashel, good-naturedly. "I am quite grieved at the weariness and fatigue my affairs are costing you."

"I was asking about Lady Blennerbore's whist," interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck. "Who have you for her party besides the Chief Justice?"

"Major M'Cartney says he can't afford it, Mamma," said the eldest daughter, slyly. "She is so very lucky with the honours!"

"Where is Thorpe," cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, not deigning to notice this speech—"he used to like his rubber?"

"He told me," said Miss Kennyfeck, "that he wouldn't play with her Ladyship any more; that one had some chance formerly, but that since she has had that touch of the palsy, she does what she likes with the Kings and Aces."

"This is atrocious; never let me hear it again," said the Mamma, indignantly; "at all events, old Mr. Moore Hacket will do."

"Poor old man, he is so blind that he has to thumb the cards all over to try and know them by the feel, and then he always washes the King and Queen's faces with a snuffy handkerchief, so that the others are sneezing at every trick they play."

"Caroline, you permit yourself to take the most improper freedoms; I desire that we may have no more of this."

"I rather like old Mr. Hacket," said the incorrigible assailant; "he mistook Mr. Pottinger's bald and polished head for a silver salver, and laid his teacup on it, the last evening he was here."

If Cashel could not help smiling at Miss Kennyfeck's sallies, he felt it was in rather a strange spirit of hospitality the approaching entertainment was given, since few of the guests were spared the most slighting sarcasms, and scarcely for any was there professed the least friendship or affection. He was, however, very new to "the world," and the strange understanding on which its daily intercourse, its social life of dinners, visits, and *déjeûners* subsists, was perfectly unknown to him. He had much to learn; but as his nature was of an inquiring character, he was as equal as he was well inclined to its task. It was then, with less enjoyment of the scene for its absurdity, than actually as an occasion to acquire knowledge of people and modes of living hitherto unknown, he listened gravely to the present discussion, and sat with attentive ears to hear who was to take in Lady Janet, and whether Sir Archy should precede the Chief Justice or not; if a Dragoon Colonel should take the *pas* of an Attorney-General, and whether it made the same difference in an individual's rank that it did, in his comfort, that he was on the half-pay list. When real rank is concerned, few things are easier than the arrangement of such details; the rules are simple, the exceptions few, if any; but in a society where the distinctions are inappreciable, where the designations are purely professional, an algebraic equation is simpler of solution than such difficulties.

Then came a very animated debate as to the places at table, wherein lay the extreme difficulty of having every one away from the fire and nobody in a draught, except of course those little valued guests who really appeared to play the ignoble part of mortar in a great edifice, being merely the cohesive ingredient that averted friction between more important materials. Next came the oft-disputed question as to whether the champagne should be served with the *petits pâtés*, after the fish, or at a remote stage of the second course, the young ladies being eager advocates of the former, Mrs. Kennyfeck as firmly denouncing the practice as a new-fangled thing, that "the Dean" himself said he had never seen at Christchurch; but the really great debate arose on a still more knotty point, and one on which it appeared the family had brought in various bills, without ever discovering the rea

remedy: it was by what means—of course, moral force means—it were possible to induce old Lady Blennerbore to rise from table whenever Mrs. Kennyfeck had decreed that move to be necessary.

It was really moving to listen to Mrs. Kennyfeck's narratives of signals unnoticed and signs unattended to; that even on the very last day her Ladyship had dined there, Mrs. Kennyfeck had done little else for three quarters of an hour than half stand and sit down again, to the misery of herself and the discomfort of her neighbours.

"Poor dear old thing," said Olivia, "she is so very near-sighted."

"Not a bit of it," said her sister; "don't tell me of bad sight that can distinguish the decanter of port from the claret, which I have seen her do some half-dozen times without one blunder."

"I'd certainly stop the supplies," said Cashel; "wouldn't that do?"

"Impossible!" said Miss Kennyfeck; "you couldn't starve the whole garrison for one refractory subject."

"Mr. Linton's plan was a perfect failure, too," said Mrs. Kennyfeck. "He thought by the introduction of some topic ladies do not usually discuss, that she would certainly withdraw; on the contrary, her Ladyship called out to me, 'I see your impatience, my dear, but I must hear the end of this naughty story.' We tried the French plan, too, and made the gentlemen rise with us; but really they were so rude and ill-tempered the entire evening after, I'll never venture on it again."

Here the whole party sighed and were silent, as if the wished-for mode of relief were as distant as ever.

"Must we really ask those Claridge girls to sing, Mamma?" said Miss Kennyfeck, after a long pause.

"Of course you must. They were taught by Costa, and they are always asked wherever they go."

"As a matter of curiosity, Mr. Cashel, the thing is worth hearing. Paganini's monocorde was nothing to it, for they'll go through a whole scena of Donizetti with only one note on their voice. Oh dear! how very tiresome it all is: the same little scene of pressings, and refusals, and entreaties, and rejections, and the oft-repeated dispute of the sisters between 'Notte divina' and 'Non vedro mai,' ending in that Tyrolese thing, which is on every organ in the streets, and has not the merit of the little shaved dog with the hat in his mouth, to make it droll. And then"—here Miss Kennyfeck caught a side glance of a most rebuking frown on her mother's face, so that adroitly addressing herself to Cashel, she seemed unaware of it—"and then, when the singing is over, and those who detest music are taking their revenge by abusing the singers, and people are endeavouring to patch up the interrupted chattings—then, I suppose, we

are, quite suddenly, without the slightest premeditation, to suggest a quadrille or carpet-dance. This is to be proposed as a most new and original idea that never occurred to any one before, and is certain to be hailed with a warm enthusiasm: all the young ladies smiling and smirking, and the gentlemen fumbling for their soiled kid gloves—clean ones would destroy the merit of the impromptu."

"I'm certain Mr. Cashel's impression of our society here will scarcely be flattering, from what he has heard this evening," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, rising.

"He'll see with his own eyes to-morrow night," said Miss Kennyfeck, coolly.

"Will you favour me with a little of your time in the morning?" said Mr. Kennyfeck to Cashel. "I find that I cannot avoid troubling you; there are several documents for signature, and if you could devote an hour, or, if possible, two——"

"I am perfectly at your orders," said Cashel; "the ladies say that they will not ride, and therefore dispose of me as you like."

A hearty good night followed, and the party broke up.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A DRIVE WITH THE LADIES.

"Geld kann vieles in der Welt."—WIENER LIED.
(Money can do much in this world.)

WHEN Cashel descended the stairs to breakfast, he took a peep into the drawing-room as he went, some slight hope of seeing Olivia, perhaps, suggesting the step. He was disappointed, however; except a servant arranging candles in the lustres, the room was empty. The same fate awaited him in the breakfast-room, where a small table, most significantly laid for two, showed that a *tête-à-tête* with his host was in store for him. No wonder, then, if Mr. Kennyfeck saw something of impatience in the air of his young guest, whose eyes turned to the door each time it opened, or were as hastily directed to the garden at each stir without—evident signs of thoughts directed in channels different from the worthy solicitor's.

Confess, my dear reader—if you be of the sex to judge of these matters—confess it is excessively provoking, when you have prepared your mind, sharpened your wit—perhaps, too, curled your whiskers—with a latent

hope that you are to meet and converse with two very handsome and sprightly girls, that the interview is converted into a scene with "Papa." For ourselves, who acknowledge to have a kind of catholicism in these affairs, who like the dear creatures in all the flaunting dash of a riding-hat and habit, cantering away of a breezy day, with laughing voice and half uncurled hair; who delight to see them lounging in a britschka or lolling in a phaeton; who gaze with rapture on charms heightened by the blaze of full-dress, and splendid in all the brilliancy of jewels and flowers; we own that we have a kind of fondness, almost amounting to a preference, to the prim coquettishness of a morning-dress—some light muslin thing, floating and gauzy—showing the figure to perfection, and in its simplicity suiting well the two braids of hair so innocently banded on the cheeks. There is something of conscious power in the quiet garb, a sense of trustfulness; it is like the warrior advancing without his weapons to a conference that is exceedingly pleasing, seeming to say, You see that I am not a being of tulle, and gauze, and point de Bruxelles, of white satin, and turquoise, and pink camelias, but creature whose duties may be in the daily round of life, meant to sit beside on a grassy slope as much as on a velvet ottoman, to talk with, as well as flirt with.

We have no means of knowing if Cashel was of our mind, and whether these demi-toilette visions were as suggestive to his as they are to our imagination, but that he bore his disappointment with a very bad grace we can perfectly answer for, and showed, by his distracted manner and inattentive air, that the Papa's companionship was a very poor substitute for the daughters'.

It must be owned, too, that Mr. Kennyfeck was scarcely a brilliant converser, nor, had he been so, was the matter under consideration of a kind to develop and display his abilities. The worthy solicitor had often promised himself the pleasure he now enjoyed of recounting the whole story of the law proceedings. It was the great event of his own life, "his Waterloo," and he dwelt on every detail with a prosy dalliance that was death to the listener. Legal subtleties, shrewd and cunning devices of crafty counsellors, all the artful dodges of the profession, Cashel heard with a scornful indifference or a downright apathy, and it demanded all Mr. Kennyfeck's own enthusiasm in the case to make him persist in a narrative so uninteresting to its only auditor.

"I fear I weary you, Mr. Cashel," said the solicitor, "with these details, but I really supposed that you must feel desirous of knowing not only the exact circumstances of your estate, but of learning the very singular history by which your claim was substantiated."

"If I am to be frank," said Cashel, boldly, "I must tell you that these

things possess not the slightest interest for me. When I was a gambler—which, unfortunately, I was at one time—whether I won or lost, I never could endure to discuss the game after it was over. So long as there was a goal to reach, few men could feel more ardour in the pursuit. I believe I have the passion for success as strong as my neighbours, but the struggle over, the prize won, whether by myself or another, it mattered not, it ceased to have any hold upon me. I could address myself to a new contest, but never look back on the old one."

"So that," said Kennyfeck, drawing a long breath to conceal a sigh, "I am to conclude that this is a topic you would not desire to renew. Well, I yield of course, only pray how am I to obtain your opinion on questions concerning your property?"

"My opinions," said Cashel, "must be mere arbitrary decisions, come to without any knowledge; that you are well aware of. I know nothing of this country—neither its interests, its feelings, nor its tastes. I know just as little of what wealth will do, and what it will not do. Tell me, therefore, in a few words, what other men, situated as I am, would pursue, what habits they would adopt, how live, and with whom. If I can conform, without any great sacrifice of personal freedom, I'll do so, because I know of no slavery so bad as notoriety. Just then give me your counsel, and I ask, intending to follow it."

Few men were less able than Mr. Kennyfeck to offer a valuable opinion on these difficult subjects, but the daily routine of his professional life had made him acquainted with a certain detail that seemed, to himself at least, an undeviating rule of procedure. He knew that, to the heir of a large estate coming of age, a wife and a seat in Parliament were the two first objects. He had so often been engaged in drawing up settlements for the one and raising money for the other contingency, that they became as associated in his mind with one-and-twenty years of age as though intended by Nature to denote it.

With some reserve, which we must not scrutinise, he began with the political object.

"I suppose, Sir," said he, "you will desire to enter Parliament?"

"I should like it," said Cashel, earnestly, "if a sense of inferiority would not weigh too heavily on me to compensate for the pleasure. With an education so neglected as mine, I should run the hazard of either unjustly depreciating my own judgment, or, what is worse, esteeming it at more than its worth. Now, though I suspect that the interest of politics would have a great attraction for me, I should always occupy too humble a station regarding them, to make that interest a high one. Omit Parliament, then, and what next?"

"The duties of a country gentleman are various and important—the management of your estates——"

"This I must leave in your hands," said Cashel, abruptly. "Suggest something else."

"Well, of course, these come in a far less important category; but the style of your living, the maintenance of a house befitting your rank and property, the reception of your country neighbours—all these are duties."

"I am very ignorant of forms," said Cashel, haughtily; "but I opine that if a man spare no money, with a good cook, a good cellar, a good stable, and '*carte blanche*' from the owner to make free with everything, these duties are not very difficult to perform."

Had Mr. Kennyfeck known more of such matters, he might have told him that something was still wanting—that something which can throw its perfume of good-breeding and elegance over the humble dinner-party in a cottage, and yet be absent from the gorgeous splendour of a banquet in a palace. Mr. Kennyfeck did not know this, so he accorded his fullest assent to Cashel's opinion.

"What comes next?" said Roland, impatiently, "for as I am neither politician nor country gentleman, nor can I make a pursuit of mere hospitality, I really do not see what career is open to me."

Mr. Kennyfeck had been on the eve of introducing the topic of marriage, when this sally suddenly routed the attempt. The man who saw nothing to occupy him in politics, property, or social intercourse, would scarcely deem a wife an all-sufficient ambition. Mr. Kennyfeck was posed.

"I see, Sir, your task is a hard one; it is no less than to try and conform my savage tastes and habits to civilised usages—a difficult thing, I am certain; however, I promise compliance with any ritual for a while. I have often been told that the possession of fortune in these countries imposes more restraints in the shape of duties, than does poverty elsewhere. Let me try the problem for myself. Now, dictate, and I obey."

"After all," said Mr. Kennyfeck, taking courage, "few men would deem it a hard condition in which to find themselves master of above 16,000*l.* a year, to enter Parliament, to keep a good house, and marry—as every man in your circumstances may—the person of his choice."

"Oh! Is matrimony another article of the code?" said Cashel, smiling. "Well, that is the greatest feature, because the others are things to abandon, if not found to suit your temper or inclination—but a wife—that does look somewhat more permanent. No matter, I'll adventure all and everything—of course depending on your guidance for the path."

Mr. Kennyfeck was too happy at these signs of confidence to neglect

an opportunity for strengthening the ties, and commenced a very prudent harangue upon the necessity of Cashel's using great caution in his first steps, and not committing himself by anything like political pledges, till he had firmly decided which side to adopt. "As to society," said he, "of course you will select those who please you most for your intimates; but in politics there are many considerations very different from mere liking. Be only guarded, however, in the beginning, and you risk nothing by waiting."

"And as to the other count in the indictment," said Cashel, interrupting a rather prosy dissertation about political parties—"as to the other count—Matrimony I mean. I conclude, as the world is so exceedingly kind as to take a profound interest in all the sayings and doings of a man with money, that perhaps it is not indifferent regarding so eventful a step as his Marriage. Now, pray, Mr. Kennyfeck, having entered Parliament, kept open house, hunted, shot, raced, dined, gambled, duelled, and the rest, to please society, how must I satisfy its exigencies in this last particular? I mean, is there any peculiar style of lady—tall, short, brunette or fair, dark-eyed or blue-eyed, or what, in short, is the person I must marry if I would avoid transgressing any of those formidable rules which seem to regulate every action of your lives, and, if I may believe Mr. Phillis, superintend the very colour of your cravat and the shape of your hat?"

"Oh, believe me," replied Mr. Kennyfeck, with a bland persuasiveness, "fashion is only exigeant in small matters; the really momentous affairs of life are always at a man's own disposal. Whoever is fortunate enough to be Mr. Cashel's choice, becomes, by the fact, as elevated above envious criticisms, as she will be above the sphere where they alone prevail."

"So far that is very flattering. Now for another point. There is an old shipmate of mine—a young Spanish officer—who has lived rather a rakish kind of life. I'm not quite sure he has not had a brush or two with our flag, for he dealt a little in ebony—you understand—the slave-trade, I mean. How would these fine gentlemen, I should like to know, receive him? Would they look coldly and distantly at him? I should naturally wish to see him at my house, but not that he might be offered anything like slight or insult."

"I should defer it, certainly. I would recommend you not pressing this visit, till you have surrounded yourself with a certain set, a party by whom you will be known and upheld."

"So then, if I understand you aright, I must obtain a kind of security for my social good conduct before the world will trust me? Now, this does seem rather hard, particularly as no man is guilty till he has been convicted."

"The bail-bond is little else than a matter of form," said Mr. Kennyfeck, smiling, and glad to cap an allusion which his professional pursuits made easy of comprehension.

"Well!" sighed Cashel, "I'm not quite certain that this same world of yours and I shall be long friends, if even we begin as such. I have all my life been somewhat of a rebel, except where authority was lax enough to make resistance unnecessary. How am I to get on here, hemmed in and fenced by a hundred restrictions?"

Mr. Kennyfeck could not explain to him that these barriers were less restrictions against personal liberty than defences against aggression; so he only murmured some common-places about "getting habituated," and "time," and so on, and apologised for what he, in reality, might have expatiated on as privileges.

"My mistress wishes to know, Sir," said a footman, at this juncture, "if Mr. Cashel will drive out with her? the carriage is at the door."

"Delighted!" cried Cashel, looking at the same time most uncourteously pleased to get away from his tiresome companion.

Cashel found Mrs. Kennyfeck and her daughters seated in a handsome barouche, whose appointments, bating, perhaps, some little exuberance in display, were all perfect. The ladies, too, were most becomingly attired, and the transition from the little cobwebbed den of the solicitor to the free air and pleasant companionship, excited his spirits to the utmost.

"How bored you must have been by that interview!" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as they drove away.

"Why do you say so?" said Cashel, smiling.

"You looked so weary, so thoroughly tired out, when you joined us. I'm certain Mr. Kennyfeck has been reading aloud all the deeds and documents of the trial, and reciting the hundred-and-one difficulties which his surpassing acuteness, poor dear man! could alone overcome."

"No, indeed you wrong him," said Roland, with a laugh; "he scarcely alluded to what he might have reasonably dwelt upon with pride, and what demands all my gratitude. He was rather giving me, what I so much stand in need of, a little lecture on my duties and devoirs as a possessor of fortune; a code, I shame to confess, perfectly strange to me."

A very significant glance from Mrs. Kennyfeck towards the girls revealed the full measure of her contempt for the hardihood of poor Mr. Kennyfeck's daring, but quickly assuming a smile, she said, "And are we to be permitted to hear what these excellent counsels were, or are these what the Admiralty calls 'secret instructions?'"

"Not in the least. Mr. Kennyfeck sees plainly enough—it is but too palpable—that I am as ignorant of this new world as he himself would be,

if dropped down suddenly in an Indian encampment, and that as the thing I detest most in this life is any unnecessary notoriety, I want to do, as far as in me lies, like my neighbours. I own to you, that the little sketch with which he favoured me is not too fascinating, but he assures me that with time, and patience, and zeal, I'll get over my difficulties, and make a very tolerable country gentleman."

"But, my *dear* Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a great emphasis on the epithet, "why do you think of listening to Mr. Kennyfeck on such a subject? Poor man, he takes all his notions of men and manners from the Exchequer and Common Pleas."

"Papa's models are all in horse-hair wigs—fat mummies in ermine!" said Miss Kennyfeck.

"When Mr. Cashel knows Lord Charles," said Olivia.

"Or Mr. Linton——"

"Or the Dean," broke in Mrs. Kennyfeck; "for although a Churchman, his information on every subject is boundless."

Miss Kennyfeck gave a sly look towards Cashel, which very probably entered a dissent to her mamma's opinion.

"If I were you," resumed she, tenderly, "I know what I should do; coolly rejecting all their counsels, I should fashion my life as it pleased myself to live, well assured that in following my bent, I should find plenty of people only too happy to lend me their companionship. Just reflect, for a moment, how very agreeable you can make your house, without in the least compromising any taste or inclination of your own; without, in fact, occupying your mind on the subject."

"But the world," remarked Mrs. Kennyfeck, "must be cared for! It would not do for one in Mr. Cashel's station to form his associates only among those whose agreeability is their recommendation."

"Then let him know the Dean, Mamma," said Miss Kennyfeck, slyly.

"Yes, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, not detecting the sarcasm, "I cannot fancy one more capable of affording judicious counsel. You spoke about ordering plate, Mr. Cashel; but of course you will apply to Storr and Mortimer. Everything is so much better in London; otherwise, here we are at Leonard's."

The carriage drove up, as she spoke, to the door of a very splendid-looking shop, where in all the attractive display modern taste has invented, plate and jewellery glittered and dazzled.

"It was part of Mr. Kennyfeck's counsel, this morning," said Cashel, "that I should purchase anything I want in Ireland, so far, at least, as practicable; so, if you will aid me in choosing, we'll take the present opportunity."

Mrs. Kennyfeck was overjoyed at the bare mention of such an occasion of display, and sailed into the shop with an air that spoke plain as words themselves, "I'm come to make your fortune." So palpable, indeed, was the manner of her approach, that the shopman hastily retired to seek the proprietor of the establishment—a little pompous man, with a bald head—who, having a great number of "bad debts" among his high clients, had taken to treating great folk with a very cool assumption of equality.

"Mr. Cashel is come to look about some plate, Mr. Leonard. Let us see your book of drawings; and have you those models you made for Lord Kellorane?"

"We have better, ma'am," said Leonard. "We have the plate itself. If you will step up-stairs. It is all laid out on the tables. The fact is"—here he dropped his voice—"his Lordship's marriage with Miss Fenchurch is broken off, and he will not want the plate, and we have his orders to sell it at once."

"And is that beautiful pony-phaeton, with the two black Arabians, to be sold?" asked Miss Kennyfeck, eagerly. "He only drove them once, I think."

"Yes, Madam, everything: they are all to be auctioned at Dycer's to-day."

"At what hour?" inquired Cashel.

"At three, precisely, Sir."

"Then it wants but five minutes of the time," said Cashel, looking at his watch.

"But the plate, sir? Such an opportunity may never occur again," broke in Leonard, fearful of seeing his customer depart unprofitably.

"Oh, to be sure. Let us see it," said Cashel, as he handed Mrs. Kennyfeck up-stairs.

An exclamation of surprise and delight burst from the party at the magnificent display which greeted them on entering the room. How splendid—what taste—how very beautiful—so elegant—so massive—so chaste! and fifty other encomiastic phrases.

"Very fine, indeed, ma'am," chimed in Leonard; "cost fifteen and sevenpence an ounce throughout, and now to be sold for thirteen shillings."

"What is the price?" said Cashel, in a low whisper.

"There are, if I remember right, Sir, but I'll ascertain in a moment, eight thousand ounces."

"I want to know the sum in one word," rejoined Cashel, hastily.

"It will be something like three thousand seven hundred and——"

"Well, say three thousand seven hundred, it is mine."

"These ice-pails are not included, Sir."

"Well, send them also, and let me know the price. How handsome that brooch is! Let me see it on your velvet dress, Mrs. Kennyfeck. Yes, that really looks well. Pray let it remain there."

"Oh, I could not think of such a thing! It is far too costly. It is the most splendid——"

"You'll not refuse me, I hope, a first request, Madam," said he, with a half-offended air.

Mrs. Kennyfeck, really overwhelmed by the splendour of the gift, complied with a reluctant shame.

"These are the diamonds that were ordered for the bride," said Leonard, opening a jewel-casket, and exhibiting a most magnificent suite.

"Oh, how sorry she must be!" cried Miss Kennyfeck, as she surveyed the glittering mass.

"If she loved him," murmured Olivia, in a low whisper, as if to herself, but overheard by Cashel, who kept his eyes towards her with an expression of deep interest.

"If the gentleman stood in need of such a set," said Leonard, "I am empowered to dispose of them at the actual cost. It is old Mr. Fenchurch who suffers all the loss, and he can very well afford it. As a wedding present, Sir——"

"But I am not going to be married, that I know of," said Cashel, smiling.

"Perhaps not this week, Sir, or the next," rejoined the self-sufficient jeweller; "but, of course, that time will come. Two thousand pounds for such a suite is positively getting them a present, to break them up and reset them."

"How shocking!" cried Miss Kennyfeck.

"Yes, Madam; but what is to be done? they only suit large fortunes in their present form; these, unfortunately, are very rare with us."

"A quarter past three!" exclaimed Cashel; "we shall be too late."

"And the diamonds, Sir?" said Leonard, following him down stairs.

"Do *you* think them so handsome?" said Cashel to Olivia, as she walked at his side.

"Oh, they are most beautiful," replied she, with a bashful falling of her eyelids.

"I'll take them also," whispered Cashel to Leonard, who, for perhaps the only time for years past, accompanied the party, bare-headed, to their carriage, and continued bowing till they drove away.

"Dycer's," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "and as fast as you can."

With all their speed they came too late. The beautiful equipage had been already disposed of, and was driving from the gate as they drew up.

"How provoking!—how terribly provoking!" exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"I declare, I think them handsomer than ever," said Miss Kennyfeck, as she surveyed the two well-matched and highly-bred ponies.

"Who bought them?" asked Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"I am the fortunate individual, or rather the unhappy one, who excites such warm regrets," said Mr. Linton, as he lounged on the door of the carriage. "I would I were Rothschild, or his son, or his godson, to beg your acceptance of them."

"What did you give for them, Mr. Linton?" asked Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"How unfair to ask; and you, too, who understand these things so well."

"I want to purchase them," said she, laughing; "that was my reason."

"To you, then, the price is what I have just paid—a hundred and fifty."

"How cheap!"

"Absolutely for nothing. I bought them on no other account. I really do not want such an equipage."

"To be serious, then," resumed Mrs. Kennyfeck, "we came here with Mr. Cashel to purchase them, and just arrived a few minutes too late."

"Quite early enough to allow of my being able to render you a slight service; without, however, the satisfaction of its having demanded any effort from me. Will you present me to Mr. Cashel?" The gentlemen bowed and smiled, and Linton resumed. "If you care for the ponies, Mr. Cashel, I am delighted to say they are at your service. I really bought them, as I say, because they were going for nothing." Cashel did not know how to return the generosity, but accepted the offer, trusting that time would open an occasion to repay the favour.

"Shall I send them home to you, or will you drive them?"

"Will you venture to accompany me?" said Cashel, turning to Olivia Kennyfeck; who, seeing at once the impropriety of a proposal, which Roland's ignorance of the world alone could have committed, was silent and confused.

"Are you afraid, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Kennyfeck, to show that all other objections might be waived.

"Oh no, Mamma, if you are not."

"The ponies are perfectly quiet," said Linton.

"I'm certain nothing will happen," said Miss Kennyfeck, with a most significant glance at her sister.

"Take care of her, Mr. Cashel," said the Mamma, as Roland handed the blushing girl to her place. "I have never trusted her in any one's charge before, and if I had not such implicit confidence——" Before the sentence

was finished, the ponies sprang forward in a trot, the equipage in a moment fled and disappeared from view.

"A fine young fellow, he seems to be," said Linton, as he raised his hat in adieu; "and so frank, too!" There was a something in his smile that looked too intelligent, but Mrs. Kennyfeck affected not to notice it, as she said "Good-by."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GREAT KENNYFECK DINNER.

There were lords and ladies—I saw myself—
A duke with his Garter, a knight with his Guelph.
"Orders"—as bright as the eye could see,
The "Golden Fleece, and the "Saint Esprit;"
Black Eagles, and Lions, and even a Lamb,
Such an odd-looking thing—from the great "Nizam;"
Shamrocks and Thistles there were in a heap,
And the Legion of Honour from "Louis Philippe,"
So I asked myself—Does it not seem queer,
What can bring this goodly company here?

MRS. THORPE'S FÊTE AT TWICKENHAM.

ALTHOUGH Mrs. Kennyfeck's company were invited for seven o'clock, it was already something more than half-past ere the first guest made his appearance, and he found himself alone in the drawing-room; Mrs. Kennyfeck, who was a very shrewd observer of everything in high life, having remembered, that it twice occurred to herself and Mr. K. to have arrived the first at the Secretary's "Lodge," in the Park, and that the noble hostess did not descend till at least some two or three others had joined them.

The "first man" to a dinner is the next most miserable thing to the "last man" at leaving it. The cold air of solitude, the awkwardness of seeming too eager to be punctual, the certainty, almost inevitable, that the next person who arrives is perfectly odious to you, and that you will have to sustain a *téte-à-téte* with the man of all others you dislike, all these are the agreeables of the first man; but he who now had to sustain them was, happily, indifferent to their tortures. He was an old, very deaf gentleman, who had figured at the dinner-tables of the capital for half a century, on no one plea that any one could discover, save that he was a "Right Honourable." The privilege of sitting at the Council had conferred the far pleasanter one of assisting at dinners, and his political career, if not very ambitious, had been, what few men can say, unruffled.

He seated himself, then, in a very well-cushioned chair, and with that easy smile of benevolent meaning which certain deaf people assume as a counterpoise for the want of colloquial gifts, prepared to be, or at least to look, a very agreeable old gentleman to the next arrival. A full quarter of an hour passed over, without anything to break the decorous stillness of the house; when suddenly the door was thrown wide, and the butler announced Sir Harvey Upton and Captain Jennings. These were two Hussar officers, who entered with that admirable accompaniment of clinking sabres, sabretasches, and spurs, so essential to a cavalry appearance.

"Early, by Jove!" cried one, approaching the mirror over the chimney-piece, and arranging his moustaches, perfectly unmindful of the presence of the Right Honourable who sat near it.

"They are growing worse and worse in this house, I think," cried the other. "The last time I dined here, we sat down at a quarter to nine."

"It's all Linton's fault," drawled out the first speaker; "he told a story about Long Wellesley asking some one for 'ten,' and apologising for an early dinner, as he had to speak in the House afterwards. Who is here? neat steppers, those horses!"

"It is Kilgoff, and his new wife,—do you know her?"

"No; she's not one of those pale girls we used to ride with at Leamington?"

There was no time for reply, when the names were announced, "Lord and Lady Kilgoff!" and a very weakly-looking old man, with a blue inside vest, and enormous diamond studs in his shirt, entered, supporting a very beautiful young woman, whose proud step, and glancing eye, were strange contrasts to his feeble and vacant expression. The Hussars exchanged significant but hasty glances, and fell back, while the others advanced up the room.

"Our excellent hostess," said my Lord, in a low, but distinct voice, "will soon shame Wilton-crescent itself in late hours. I fancy it's nigh eight o'clock."

"It's not their fault, poor things," said she, lying back in a chair and disposing her magnificent dress into the most becoming folds; "people will come late, do what one may."

"They may do so, that's very true; but I would beg to observe you need not wait for them." This was said with a smile towards the Hussars, as though to imply—"There is no reason why you should not express an opinion, if it agree with mine."

The Baronet immediately bowed, and smiling, so as to show a very white range of teeth beneath his dark moustache, said: "In part, I agree with your Lordship; but it requires the high hand of fashion to reform the

abuse." Here a most insidious glance at her Ladyship most effectually conveyed the point of his meaning.

Just then, in all the majesty of crimson velvet, Mrs. Kennyfeck appeared, her comely person heaving under the accumulated splendour of lace, flowers, and jewellery. Her daughters, more simply, but still handsomely dressed, followed, Mr. Kennyfeck bringing up the rear, in very evident confusion at having torn his kid gloves, a misfortune which he was not clear should be buried in silence, or made the subject of public apology.

Lady Kilgoff received Mrs. Kennyfeck's excuses for being late with a very quiet, gentle smile; but my Lord, less given to forgiveness, held his watch towards Mr. Kennyfeck, and said: "There's always an excuse for a man of business, Sir, or this would be very reprehensible." Fortunately for all parties the company now poured in faster, every instant saw some two or three arrive: indeed, with such speed did they appear, it seemed as if they had all waited for a movement *en masse:* Judges and Generals, with nieces and daughters manifold, country gentlemen, clients, the *élite* of Dublin diners-out, the Whites, the Rigbys, with their ringleted girls, the young Member for Macturk, the Solicitor-General and Mrs. Knivett, and, at last, escorted by his staff of curates and small vicars, came "the Dean" himself, conducting a very learned dissertation on the musical properties of the "Chickgankazoo," a three-stringed instrument of an African tribe, and which he professed to think "admirably adapted for country congregations too poor to buy an organ!" "Any one could play it, Softly could play it, Mrs. Kennyfeck could——"

"How do you do, Mr. Dean?" said that lady, in her sweetest of voices.

The Dean accepted the offered hand, but, without attending to the salutation, went on with a very curious argument respecting the vocal chords in the human throat, which he promised to demonstrate on any thin lady in the company.

The Chief Secretary's fortunate arrival, however, rescued the devoted fair one from the Dean's scientific ardour, for Mr. Meek was a great personage in the chief circles of Dublin. Any ordinary manner, in comparison with Mr. Downie Meek's, would be as linsey-wolsey to three-pile velvet! There was a yielding softness, a delicious compliance about him, which won him the world's esteem, and pointed him out to the Cabinet as the very man to be "Secretary for Ireland." Conciliation would be a weak word to express the *suave* but winning gentleness of his official dealings. The most frank of men, he was unbounded in professions, and if so elegant a person could have taken a hint from so humble a source, we should say, that he had made his zoological studies available and imitated the cuttle-fish, since when close

penned by an enemy he could always escape, by muddying the water. In this great dialectic of the Castlereagh school he was perfect, and could become totally unintelligible at the shortest notice.

After a few almost whispered words to his hostess, Mr. Meek humbly requested to be presented to Mr. Cashel. Roland, who was then standing beside Miss Kennyfeck, and listening to a rather amusing catalogue of the guests, advanced to make the Secretary's acquaintance. Mr. Downie Meek's approaches were perfect, and in the few words he spoke, most favourably impressed Cashel with his unpretentious, unaffected demeanour.

"Are we waiting for any one, Mr. Kennyfeck?" said his spouse, with a delicious simplicity of voice.

"Oh, certainly!" exclaimed her less accomplished husband, "Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline, and Lord Charles Frobisher, have not arrived."

"It appears to *me*"—a favourite expression of his Lordship, with a strong emphasis on the pronoun—"it appears to *me*," said Lord Kilgoff, "that Sir Andrew MacFarline waits for the tattoo at the Royal Barrack to dress for dinner;" and he added, somewhat lower, "I made a vow, which I regret to have broken to-day, never to dine wherever he is invited."

"Here they come! here they come at last," cried out several voices together, as the heavy tread of carriage-horses was heard advancing, and the loud summons of the footman resounded through the square.

Sir Andrew and Lady Janet MacFarline were announced in Mr. Pearse's most impressive manner; and then, after a slight pause, as if to enable the company to recover themselves from the shock of such august names, Lord Charles Frobisher and Captain Foster.

Sir Andrew was a tall, raw-boned, high-cheeked old man, with a white head, red nose, and a very Scotch accent, whose manners, after forty years' training, still spoke of the time that he carried a halbert in the "Black Watch." Lady Janet was a little, grim-faced, grey-eyed old lady, with a nunch, who with a most inveterate peevishness of voice, and a most decided tendency to make people unhappy, was the terror of the garrison.

"We hae na kept ye waitin, Mrs. Kannyfack, I humbly hope?" said Sir Andrew.

"A good forty minutes, Sir Andrew," broke in Lord Kilgoff, showing his watch; "but you are always the last."

"He was not recorded as such in the official despatch from 'Maida,' my Lord," said Lady Janet, fiercely; "but with some people there is more virtue in being early at dinner than first up the breach in an assault!"

"The siege will always keep hot, my Lady," interposed a very well whiskered gentleman in a blue coat and two inside-waistcoats "the soup will not."

"Ah! Mr. Linton," said she, holding out two fingers. "Why weren't you at our pic-nic?" Then she added, lower: "Give me your arm in to dinner. I can't bear that tiresome old man." Linton bowed and seemed delighted, while a scarcely perceptible motion of the brows conveyed an apology to Miss Kennyfeck.

Dinner was at length announced, and after a little of what Sir Andrew called "clubbing the battalions" they descended in a long procession. Cashel, after vainly essaying to secure either of the Kennyfeck girls as his companion, being obliged to pair off with Mrs. White, the lady who always declined, but never failed to come.

It is a singular fact in the physiology of Amphytrionism, that second-class people can always succeed in a "great dinner," though they fail egregiously in all attempts at a small party. We reserve the reason for another time, to record the fact, that Mrs. Kennyfeck's table was both costly and splendid: the soups were admirable, the Madeira perfect in flavour, the pâtés as hot, and the champagne as cold, the fish as fresh, and the venison as long kept, the curry as high seasoned, and the pine-apple ice as delicately simple, as the most refined taste could demand. The material enjoyments were provided with elegance and abundance, and the guests—the little chagrin of the long waiting over—all disposed to be chatty and agreeable.

Like a tide first breaking on a low strand, in small and tiny ripples, then gradually coming bolder in, with courage more assured, and greater force, the conversation of a dinner usually runs; till at last at the high flood the great waves tumble madly one upon another, and the wild chorus of the clashing water wakes up "the spirit of the storm."

Even without the aid of the "Physiologie du Goût," people will talk of eating while they eat, and so the chit-chat was *cuisine* in all its moods and tenses, each bringing to the common stock some new device in cookery, and some anecdotes of his travelled experience in "gourmandise," and while Mr. Linton and Lord Charles celebrated the skill of the "Cadran," or the "Schwan" at Vienna, the "Dean" was critically explaining to poor Mrs. Kennyfeck, that Homer's heroes had probably the most perfect *rôti* that ever was served, the juices of the meat being preserved in such large masses.

"Soles, with a 'gratin' of fine gingerbread, I saw at Metternich's," said Mr. Linton, "and they were excellent."

"I like old Jules Perregaux's idea better, what he calls his *côtelettes à la financière*."

"What are they? I never tasted them."

"Very good mutton cutlets *en papillotte*, the envelopes being billets de banque of a thousand francs each."

"Is it permitted to help one's self twice, my Lord?"

I called for the dish again, but found it had been too successful. De Brigues did a neat thing that way, in a little supper he gave to the artistes of the Opéra-Comique; the jellies were all served with rings in them—turquoise, diamond, emerald, pearl, and so on—so that the fair guests had all the excitement of a lottery as the *plat* came round to them."

"The kick-shaws required something o' that kind to make them endurable," said Sir Andrew, gruffly; "gie me a haggis, or a cockie-leekie."

"What is that?" said Miss Kennyfeck, who saw with a sharp malice how angrily Lady Janet looked at the notion of the coming explanation.

"I'll tell ye wi' pleasure, Miss Kannyfack, hoo to mak' a cockie leekie!"

"Cockie-leekie, *undè derivatur* cockie-leekie?" cried the Dean, who having taken a breathing canter through Homer and Horace, was quite ready for the moderns.

"What, Sir?" asked Sir Andrew, not understanding the question.

"I say, what's the derivation of your cockie-leekie—the etymology of the phrase?"

"I dinna ken, an' I dinna care. It's mair needfu' that one kens hoo to mak' it, than to speer wha gave it the name of cockie-leekie."

"More properly pronounced, *coq à lécher*," said the inexorable Dean. "The dish is a French one."

"Did ever any one hear the like?" exclaimed Sir Andrew, utterly confounded by the assertion.

"I confess, Sir Andrew," said Linton, "it's rather hard on Scotland. They say you stole all your ballad-music from Italy, and now they claim your cookery for France!"

"The record," said the Attorney-General across the table, "was tried at Trim. Your Lordships sat with the Chief Baron."

"I remember perfectly; we agreed that the King's Bench ruled right, and that the minor's claim was substantiated." Then turning to Mrs. Kennyfeck, who, out of politeness, had affected to take interest in what she could not even understand a syllable of, he entered into a very learned dissertation on "heritable property," and the great difficulties that lay in the way of defining its limits.

Meanwhile, "Pipeclay," as is not unsuitably styled mess-table talk, passed among the military, with the usual quizzing about regimental oddities. Brownrigg's cob—Hanshaw's whiskers—Talbot's buggy—and Carey's inimitable recipe for punch, the Dean throwing in his negatives here and there, to show that nothing was "too hot or too heavy" for his intellectual fingers.

"Bad law! Mr. Chief Justice," said he, in an authoritative tone,

"Doves in a cot, and coneys in a warren, go to the heir. With respect to deer——"

"Oh dear, how tiresome!" whispered Mrs. White to Cashel, who most heartily assented to the exclamation.

"What's the name o' that beastie, young gentleman?" said Sir Andrew, who overheard Cashel recounting some circumstances of Mexican life.

"The chiguire—the wild hog of the Caraccas," said Cashel. "They are a harmless sort of animal, and lead somewhat an unhappy life of it; for when they escape the crocodile in the river, they are certain to fall into the jaws of the jaguar on land."

"Pretty much like a member o' the Scotch Kirk in Ireland," said Sir Andrew, "wi' Episcopaalians on the tae haun, and Papishes on the tither. Are thae creatures gude to eat, Sir?"

"The flesh is excellent," broke in the Dean. "They are the *Cavia-Capybara* of Linnæus, and far superior to our European swine."

"I only know," said Cashel, abruptly, "that *we* never eat them, except when nothing else was to be had. They are rancid and fishy."

"A mere prejudice, Sir," responded the Dean. "If you taste the chiguire, to use the vulgar name, and let him lie in steep in a white-wine vinegar, *en marinade*, as the French say——"

"Where are you to find the white-wine vinegar in the Savannahs?" said Cashel. "You forget, Sir, that we are speaking of a country where a fowl roasted in its own feathers is a delicacy."

"Oh, how very singular! Do you mean that you eat it, feathers and all?" said Mrs. White.

"No, Madam. It's a Prairie dish, which I assure you, after all, is not to be despised. The *plat* is made this way. You take a fowl—the wild turkey, when lucky enough to find one—and cover him all over with soft red clay: the river clay is the best. You envelop him completely; in fact, you make a great ball, somewhat the size of a man's head. This done, you light a fire, and bake the mass. It requires, probably, five or six hours to make the clay perfectly hard and dry. When it cracks, the dish is done. You then break open the shell, to the outside of which the feathers adhere, and the fowl, deliciously roasted, stands before you."

"How very excellent—*le poulet braisé* of the French, exactly," said Lord Kilgoff.

"How cruel!" "How droll!" "How very shocking!" resounded through the table; the Dean the only one silent, for it was a theme on which, most singular to say, he could neither record a denial nor a correction.

"I vote for a pic-nic," cried Mrs. White, "and that Mr. Cashel shall cook us his *dinde à la Mexicaine*."

"An excellent thought," said several of the younger part of the company.

"A very bad one, in my notion," said Lord Kilgoff, who had no fancy for seeing her Ladyship scaling cliffs, and descending steep paths, when his own frail limbs did not permit of accompanying her. "Pic-nics are about as vulgar a pastime as one can imagine. Your dinner is ever a failure; your wine detestable; your table equipage arrives, smashed, or topsy-turvy——"

"*Undè* topsy-turvy?—*undè* topsy-turvy, Softly?" said the Dean, turning fiercely on the Curate. "Whence topsy-turvy? Do you give it up? Do you, Mr. Attorney? Do you, my Lord? do you give it up, eh? I thought so! Topsy-turvy, *quasi*, top side t'other way."

"It's vera ingenious," said Sir Andrew; "but I maun say I see no necessity to be always looking back to whare a word gat his birth, parentage, or eddication."

"It suggests unpleasant associations," said Lord Kilgoff, looking maliciously towards Linton, who was playing too agreeable to her Ladyship. "The etymology is the key to the true meaning. Sir, many of those expressions popularly termed Bulls——"

"Oh, *à propos* of Bulls," said Mr. Meek, in his sweetest accent, "did you hear of a very singular outrage committed yesterday upon the Lord Lieutenant's beautiful Swiss bull?"

"Did the Dean pass an hour with him?" whispered Linton to Lady Janet, who hated the dignitary.

"It must have been done by Mesmerism, I fancy," rejoined Mr. Meek. "The animal, a most fierce one, was discovered lying in his paddock, so perfectly fettered, head, horns, and feet, that he could not stir. There is every reason to connect the outrage with a political meaning, for in this morning's paper, *The Green Isle*, there is a letter from Mr. O'Bleather, with a most significant allusion to the occurrence. 'The time is not distant,' says he, 'when John Bull'—mark the phrase—'tied, fettered, and trammelled, shall lie prostrate at the feet of the once victim of his tyranny.'"

"The sedition is most completely proven by the significance of the act," cried out the Chief Justice.

"We have, consequently, offered a reward for the discovery of the perpetrators of this insolent offence, alike a crime against property, as an act subversive of the respectful feeling due to the representative of the Sovereign."

"What is the amount offered?" said Cashel.

"One hundred pounds, for such information as may lead to the conviction of the person or persons transgressing," replied the Attorney-General.

"I feel it would be very unfair to suffer the Government to proceed in an error as to the affair in question; so that I shall claim the reward, and deliver up the offender," replied Cashel, smiling.

"Who can it be?" cried Mr. Meek, in astonishment.

"Myself, Sir," said Cashel. "If you should proceed by indictment, as you speak of, I hope the Misses Kennyfeck may not have to figure as 'aiding and abetting,' for they were present when I lasso'd the animal."

"Lasso'd the Swiss bull!" exclaimed several together.

"Nothing more simple," said the Dean, holding up his napkin over Mrs. Kennyfeck's head, to the manifest terror of that lady for her yellow turban. "You take the loop of a long light rope, and, measuring the distance with your eye, you make the cast, in this manner——"

"Oh dear! oh, Mr. Dean; my bird-of-paradise plume!"

"When you represent a bull, Ma'am, you should not have feathers," rejoined the implacable Dean, with a very rough endeavour to restore the broken plume. "Had you held your head lower down, in the attitude of a bull's attack, I should have lasso'd you at once, and without difficulty."

"Lasso is part of the verb 'to weary,' 'to fatigue,' 'to *ennuyer*,' in fact," said Mr. Linton, with an admirably-put-on simplicity; and a very general smile ran through the company.

"When did you see Gosford?" said Meek, addressing one of the Hussar officers, eager to relieve the momentary embarrassment.

"Not for six months; he's in Paris now."

"Does he mention *me* in his letter to you?"

"He does," said the other, but with an evident constraint, and a side-look as he ended.

"Yes, faith, he forgets nane of us," said Sir Andrew, with a grin. "He asks after Kannyfack—ould sax-and-eightpence, he ca's you—and says he wished you were at Paris, to gie him a dinner at the—what d'ye ca' it?—the Roshy de something. I see he has a word for ye, my Lord Kilgoff. He wants to know whether my Leddie is like to gie ye an heir to the ancient house o' Kilgoff, in whilk case he'll no be so fond of playing écarté wi' George Lushington, wha has naething to pay wi' except post-obits on yer Lordship, he, he, he! Ay, and Charlie, my man," continued he, turning to the Aide-de-camp, Lord Charles Frobisher, "he asks if ye hauld four by honours as often as ye used formerly; he says there's a fellow at Paris ye couldn't hold a candle to—he never deals the adversary a card higher than the nine."

The whole company, probably in relief to the evident dismay created by the allusion to Lord Kilgoff, laughed heartily at this sally, and none more than the good-looking fellow the object of it.

"But what of Meek, Sir?—what does he say of Downie?"

"He says vera little about Mister Meek, ava; he only inquires what changes we have in the poleetical world, and where is that d—d humbug, Downie Meek?"

Another and a heartier laugh now ran through the room, in which Mr. Downie Meek cast the most imploring looks around him.

"Well," cried he, at last, "that's not fair; it is really not fair of Gosford. I appeal to this excellent company if I deserve the title."

A chorus of negatives went the round, with most energetic assurances of dissenting from the censure of the letter.

"Come now, Sir Andrew," said Meek, who, for once, losing his balance, would not even omit him in the number of approving voices—"come now, Sir Andrew, I ask you frankly—am I a humbug?"

"I canna tell," said the cautious old General, with a sly shake of the head; "I can only say, Sir, be ma saul, ye never humbugged *me*!"

This time the laugh was sincere, and actually shook the table. Mrs. Kennyfeck, who now saw that Sir Andrew, to use the phrase employed by his acquaintances, "was up," determined to withdraw, and made her telegraphic signals, which soon were answered along the line, save by Lady Janet, who stubbornly adhered to her glass of claret, with some faint hope that the lagging decanter might arrive in her neighbourhood time enough for another.

Poor Mrs. Kennyfeck's devices to catch her eye were all in vain; as well might some bore of the "House" hope for the Speaker's when he was fixedly exchanging glances with "Sir Robert." She ogled and smiled, but to no purpose.

"My Leddy—Leddy Janet," said Sir Andrew.

"I hear you, Sir; I heard you twice already. If you please, my Lord, a very little—Mr. Linton, I beg for the water. I believe, Sir Andrew, you have forgotten Mr. Gosford's kind remembrances to the Dean."

"Faith, and so I did, my Leddy. He asks after ye, Mr. Dean, wi' muckle kindness and affection, and says he never had a hearty laugh syne the day ye tried to teach Lady Caroline Jedyard to catch a sheep!"

The Dean looked stern, and Linton asked for the secret.

"It was by handing the beast atween yer knees, and so when the Dean pit himself i' the proper position, wi' his legs out, and the shepherd drove the flock towards him, by sair ill-luck it was a ram cam first, and he hoisted his Reverence up i' the air, and then laid him flat on his back,

maist dead. Ech, Sirs! but it was a sair fa', no to speak o' the damage done to his black breeches!"

This was too much for Lady Janet's endurance, and, amid the loud laughter of some, and the more difficultly suppressed mirth of others, the ladies arose.

"Yer na going, leddies! I hope that naething I said—Leddy Kilgoff, Leddy Janet, ech. We mun e'en console ourselves wi' the claret." This was said *sotto*, as the door closed and the party reseated themselves at the table.

"My Jo Janet *does* like to bide a wee," muttered he, half aloud.

"Jo!" cried the Dean, "is derived from the Italian; it's a term of endearment in both languages. It's a corruption of *Gioia mia*."

"What may that mean?"

"My joy! my life!"

"Eh, that's it, is it? Ah, Sir, these derivatives gat mony a twist and turn in the way from one land to the tither!" And with this profound bit of moralising, he sipped his glass in reverie.

The conversation now became more general, fewer personalities arose, and as the Dean, after a few efforts to correct statements respecting the "pedigrees of race-horses," "the odds at hazard," "the soundings upon the coral reefs." "the best harpoons for the sulphur-bottomed whales," only made new failures, he sulked and sat silent, permitting talk to take its course uninterrupted. The Hussar Baronet paid marked attention to Cashel, and invited him to the mess for the day following. Lord Charles overheard the invitation, and said, "I'll join the party;" while Mr. Meek, leaning over the table, in a low whisper begged Cashel to preserve the whole bull adventure a secret, as the press was really a most malevolent thing in Ireland!

During the while the Chief Justice slept profoundly, only waking as the bottle came before him, and then dropping off again. The Attorney-General, an overworked man of business, spoke little and guardedly, so that the conversation, principally left to the younger members of the party, ranged over the accustomed topics of hunting, shooting, and deer-stalking, varied by allusion, on Cashel's part, to sports of far higher, because more dangerous, excitement.

In the pleasant flurry of being attentively listened to—a new sensation for Roland—he arose and ascended to the drawing-room, where already a numerous party of refreshers had arrived. Here again Cashel discovered that he was a person of notoriety; and as, notwithstanding all Mr. Downie Meek's precaution, the "Lasso" story had got abroad, the most wonderful versions of the incident were repeated on every side.

"How did you say he effected it, Mr. Linton?" said the old deaf Countess of Dumdrum, making an ear-trumpet of her hand.

"By doing what Mr. Meek won't do with the Catholics, my Lady, taking the bull by the horns."

"Don't you think he found conciliation of service besides?" suggested Mr. Meek, with an angelic simplicity.

"Isn't he handsome! how graceful! So like a Corsair—one of Byron's heroes. I'm dying to know him. Dear me, how those Kennyfeck girls eat him up. Olivia never takes her eyes off him. He looks so bored, poor fellow! he's longing to be let alone." Such were the muttered comments on the new object of Dublin curiosity, who himself was very far from suspecting that his personal distinction had less share in his popularity than his rent-roll and his parchments.

As we are more desirous of recording the impression he himself created, than of tracing how others appeared to him, we shall make a noiseless turn of the salons, and, spy-fashion, listen behind the chairs.

"So you don't think him even good-looking, Lady Kilgoff?" said Mr. Linton, as he stood half behind her seat.

"Certainly not more than good-looking, and not so much as nice-looking, —very awkward, and ill at ease he seems."

"That will wear off, when he has the good taste to give up talking to young ladies, and devote himself to the married ones."

"Enchanting, positively enchanting, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Leicester White to a young friend beside her. "That description of the forest, over which the lianas formed an actual roof, the golden fruit hanging a hundred feet above the head, was the most gorgeous picture I ever beheld."

"I wish you could persuade him," lisped a young lady with large blue eyes, and a profusion of yellow hair in ringlets, "to write that little story of the Zambo for Lady Blumter's Annual."

"I say, Charlie," whispered the Baronet to the Aide-de-camp, "but he's wide-awake that Master Cashel; he's a very shrewd fellow, you'll see."

"Do you mean to couch his eyes, Tom?" said Lord Charles, with his usual slow, lazy intonation; "what does he say about the races, will he come?"

"Oh, he can't promise; old Kennyfeck has a hold upon him just now about law business."

"You will impress upon him, my dear Mr. Kennyfeck," said Mr. Meek, who held the lappet of the other's coat, "that there are positively—so to say—but two parties in the country—the Gentleman and the Jacobin. Whig and Tory, orange and green, have had their day; and the question is

now between those who have something to lose, and those who have everything to gain."

"I really could wish that you, who are so far better qualified than I am to explain——"

"So I will—I intend, my dear Sir. Now, when can you dine with me? You must come this week, next I shall be obliged to be in London. Shall we say Wednesday? Wednesday be it. Above all, take care that he doesn't even meet any of that dangerous faction—those Morgans. They are the very people to try a game of ascendancy over a young man of great prospects and large fortune. O'Growl wants a few men of standing to give an air of substance and respectability to the movement. Lord Witherton will be most kind to your young friend, but you must press upon him the necessity of being presented at once—we want to make him a D.L., and if he enters Parliament, to give him the Lieutenancy of the County."

While all these various criticisms were circulating, and amid an atmosphere, as it were, impregnated by plots and schemes of every kind, Cashel stood a very amused spectator of a scene wherein he never knew he was the chief actor. It would indeed have seemed incredible to him that he could, by any change of fortune, become an object of interested speculation to Lords, Ladies, Members of the Government, Church Dignitaries, and others. He was unaware that the man of fortune, with a hand to offer, a considerable share of the influence property always gives, livings to bestow, and money to lose, may be a very legitimate mark for the enterprising schemes of Mammas and Ministers, suggesting hopes alike to black-coats and blacklegs.

Perhaps, among the pleasant bits of credulity which we enjoy through life, there is none sweeter than that implicit faith we repose in the cordial expressions and flattering opinions bestowed upon us, when starting in the race, by many who merely, in the jockey phrase, "standing to win" upon us, have their own, and not *our* interest before them in the encouragement they bestow.

The discovery of the cheat is soon made, and we are too prone to revenge our own over-confidence by a general distrust, from which, again, experience, later on, rallies us. So that a young man's course is usually from over-simplicity to over-shrewdness, and then again to that negligent half-faith which either, according to the calibre of the wearer, conceals deep knowledge of life, or hides a mistaken notion of it. Let us return to Cashel, who now stood at a table, around which a considerable number of the party were grouped, examining a number of drawings, which Mr. Pepystell, the fashionable architect, had that day sent for Roland's inspection:—Houses, villas, castles, cottages, abbeys, shooting-boxes, gate-lodges, Tudor and

Saxon, Norman and Saracenic,—everything that the morbid imagination of architecture run mad could devise and amalgamate between the chaste elegance of the Greek and the tinkling absurdity of the Chinese.

"I do so love a cottage ornée," said Mrs. White, taking up a very beautiful representation of one, where rose-coloured curtains, and a group on a grass-plot, with gay dresses and parasols, entered into the composite architecture. "To my fancy, that would be a very Paradise."

"Oh, Mamma! isn't that so like dear old Kilgoran!" said a tall, thin young lady, handing an Abbey, as large as Westminster, to another in widow's black.

"Oh, Maria! I wonder at your showing me what must bring up such sad memories!" said the Mamma, affectedly, while she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"If she means her father's house," said Lady Janet to Linton, "it's about as like a like as—Lord Kilgoff to the Farnese Hercules; or his wife to any other lady in the Peerage."

"You remember Kilgoran, my Lord," said the lady in black to the Chief Justice; "does that remind you of it?"

"Very like—very like, indeed, Madam," said the old Judge, looking at a rock-work grotto in a fish-pond.

"What's this?" cried another, taking up a great Saxon fortress, with bastions, and gate-towers, and curtains, as gloomy and sombre as Indian-ink could make it.

"As a residence, I think that is far too solemn-looking and sad."

"What did you say it was, Sir?" asked the Judge.

"The elevation for the new gaol at Naas, my Lord," replied Linton, gravely.

"I'm very glad to hear it. We have been sadly crippled for room there latterly."

"Do you approve of the Panopticon plan, my Lord," said Mrs. White, who never omitted a question when a hard word could be introduced.

"It is, Madam—you are perfectly correct," said the obsequious old Judge —"very much the same kind of thing as the Pantechnicon."

"Talking of Panopticon, where's Kilgoff?" whispered Linton to one of the Hussars.

"Don't you see him yonder, behind the harp? How that poor woman must be bored by such *espionnage!*"

"If you mean to build a house, Sir," said Lady Janet, addressing Cashel with a tone of authority, "don't, I entreat of you, adopt any of these absurd outrages upon taste and convenience, but have a good square stone edifice."

"Four, or even five stories high," broke in Linton, gravely.

"Four quite enough," resumed she, "with a roomy hall, and all the reception-rooms leading off it. Let your bedrooms——"

"Be numerous enough, at all events," said Linton again.

"Of course; and so arranged that you can devote one story to families exclusively."

"Yes; the *garçons* should have their dens as remote as possible from the quieter regions."

"Have a mass of small sitting-rooms beside the larger salons. In a country-house there's nothing like letting people form their own little coteries."

"Wouldn't you have a theatre?" asked Mrs. White.

"There might be, if the circumstances admitted. But with a billiard-room and a ball-room——"

"And a snug crib for smoking," whispered one of the military.

"I don't see any better style of house," said Linton, gravely, "than those great hotels one finds on the Rhine, and in Germany generally: they have ample accommodation, and are so divided that you can have your own suite of rooms to yourself."

"Mathews used to keep house after that fashion," said Lord Kilgoff, approaching the table. "Every one ordered his own dinner, and eat it either in his own apartment or in the dining-room. You were invited for four days, never more."

"That was a great error; except in that particular, I should recommend the plan to Mr. Roland Cashel's consideration."

"I never heard of it before," said Cashel; "pray enlighten me on the subject."

"A very respectable country gentleman, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff, "who had the whim to see his company without paying what he deemed the heaviest penalty—the fatigue of playing host. He therefore invited his friends to come and do what they pleased—eat, drink, drive, ride, play—exactly as they fancied; only never to notice him otherwise than as one of the guests."

"I like his notion prodigiously," cried Cashel; "I should be delighted to imitate him."

"Nothing easier, Sir," said my Lord, "with Mr. Linton for your Prime Minister; the administration is perfectly practicable."

"Might I venture on such a liberty?"

"Too happy to be President of your Council," said Linton, gaily.

A very entreating kind of look from Olivia Kennyfeck here met Cashel's eyes, and he remarked that she left the place beside the table and walked

into the other room; he himself, although dying to follow her, had no alternative but to remain and continue the conversation.

"The first point, then," resumed Linton, "is the house. In what state is your present mansion?"

"A ruin, I believe," said Cashel.

"How picturesque!" exclaimed Mrs. Leicester White.

"I fancy not, Madam," rejoined Cashel. "I understand it is about the least prepossessing bit of stone and mortar the country can exhibit."

"No matter, let us see it; we'll improvise something, and get it ready for the Christmas holidays," said Linton. "We have—let us see—we have about two months for our preparation, and, therefore, no time to lose. We must premise to the honourable company that our accommodation is of the simplest; 'roughing' shall be the order of the day. Ladies are not to look for Lyons silk ottomans in their dressing-rooms, nor shall we promise that our conservatory furnish a fresh bouquet for each fair guest at breakfast."

"Two months are four centuries!" said Mrs. White; "we shall accept of no apologies for any short-comings, after such an age of time to prepare."

"You can have your fish from Limerick every day," said an old bluff-looking gentleman in a brown wig.

"There's a capital fellow, called Tom Cox, by the way, somewhere down in that country, who used to paint our scenes for the Garrison Theatricals. Could you make him out, he'd be so useful," said one of the military.

"By all means get up some hurdle-racing," cried another.

Meanwhile, Roland Cashel approached Olivia Kennyfeck, who was affecting to seek for some piece of music on the pianoforte.

"Why do you look so sad?" said he, in a low tone, and seeming to assist her in the search.

"Do I?" said she, with the most graceful look of artlessness. "I'm sure I didn't know it."

"There again, what a deep sigh that was; come, pray tell me, if I dare to know, what has grieved you?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing whatever. I'm sure I never felt in better spirits Dear me! Mr. Cashel, how terrified I am, there's that dreadful Lady Jane has seen us talking together."

"Well, and what then?"

"Oh, she is so mischievous, and says such horrid, spiteful things. It was she that said it——"

"Said what—what did she say?" cried he, eagerly.

"Oh, what have I done!" exclaimed she, covering her face with her

hands. "Not for the world would I have said the words. Oh, Mr. Cashel, you, who are so good and so generous, do not ask me more."

"I really comprehend nothing of all this," said Cashel, who now began to suspect that she had overheard some speech reflecting upon him, and had, without intending, revealed it; "at the same time, I must say, if I had the right, I should insist on knowing what you heard."

"Perhaps he has the right," muttered she, half aloud, as if speaking unconsciously; "I believe he has."

"Yes, yes, be assured of it;—what were the words?"

"Oh, I shall die of shame. I'll never be able to speak to you again; but don't look angry, promise that you'll forget them, swear you'll never think of my having told them, and I'll try."

"Yes, anything, everything; let me hear them."

"Well,"—here she hung her head till the long ringlets fell straight from her fair forehead, and half concealed the blushing cheek, which each moment grew redder—"I am so terrified, but you'll forgive it—I know you will—well, she said, looking towards you, 'I am not acquainted with this young gentleman yet, but if I should have that honour soon, I'll take the liberty to tell him that the worthy father's zeal in his service is ill-requited by his stealing the affections of his youngest daughter.'" Scarcely were the words uttered, when, as if the strength that sustained her up to that moment suddenly failed, she reeled back and sank fainting on a sofa.

Happily for Cashel's character for propriety, a very general rush of ladies, old and young, to the spot, prevented him taking her in his arms and carrying her to the balcony for air; but a universal demand for sal volatile, aromatic vinegar, open windows, and all the usual restoratives, concealed his agitation, which really was extreme.

"You are quite well now, dearest," said her Mamma, bathing her temples, and so artistically, as to make her pale face seem even more beautiful in the slight dishevelment of her hair. "It was the heat."

"Yes, Mamma," muttered she, quite low.

"Hem! I thought so," whispered Lady Janet to a neighbour. "She was too warm."

"I really wish that young ladies would reserve these scenes for fitting times and places. That open window has brought back my lumbago," said Lord Kilgoff.

"The true treatment for syncope," broke in the Dean, "is not by stimulants. The want of blood on the brain is produced by mechanical causes, and you have merely to hold the person up by the legs——"

"Oh, Mr. Dean! Oh, fie!" cried twenty voices together.

"The Dean is only exemplifying his etymology on 'top side t'other way,' cried Linton.

"Lord Kilgoff's carriage stops the way," said a servant. And now, the first announcement given, a very general air of leave-taking pervaded the company.

"Won't you have some more muffling?—nothing round your throat?—a little negus, my Lord, before venturing into the night air."—"How early!"—"How late!"—"What a pleasant evening!"—"What a fine night!"—"May I offer you my arm?—mind that step—good-by, good-by—don't forget to-morrow."—"Your shawl is blue—that's Lady Janet's."—"Which is your hat?"—"That's not mine. Thanks—don't take so much trouble."—"Not your carriage, it is the next but one—mind the draught."—A hundred good nights, and they are gone! So ends a dinner-party, and of all the company not a vestige is seen, save the blaze of the low-burned wax-lights, the faded flowers, the deranged furniture, and the jaded looks of those, whose faces wreathed in smiles for six mortal hours, seek at last the hard-bought and well-earned indulgence of a hearty yawn!

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TUBBER-BEG.

He was, the world said, a jovial fellow,
Who ne'er was known at Fortune to repine;
Increasing years had rendered him more mellow,
And age improved him—as it did his wine.
SIR GAVIN GWYNNE.

THE Shannon, after expanding into that noble sheet of water called Lough Derg, suddenly turns to the southward, and enters the valley of Killaloe, one of the most beautiful tracts of country which Ireland, so rich in river scenery, can boast. The transition from the wide lake with its sombre background of grey mountain and rocky islands, bleak and bare, to the cultivated aspect of this favoured spot, is like that experienced in passing from beneath the gloom of lowering thunder-clouds into light and joyous sunshine. Rich waving woods of every tint and hue of foliage, with here and there some spreading lawns of deepest green, clothe the mountains on either side, while in bright eddies the rapid river glides in between, circling and winding as in playful wantonness, till on the far distance it is seen passing beneath the ancient bridge of Killaloe, whose cathedral towers stand out against the sky.

On first emerging from the Lake, the river takes an abrupt bend, round a rocky point, and then sweeping back again, in a bold curve, forms a little bay of deep and tranquil water, descending towards which the rich meadows are seen, dotted with groups of ancient forest trees, and backed by a dense skirting of timber. At one spot, where the steep declivity of the ground scarce affords footing for the tall ash-trees, stands a little cottage, at the extremity of which is an old square tower; this is Tubber-beg.

As you sail down the river you catch but one fleeting glance at the cottage, and when you look again it is gone! The projecting headlands, with the tall trees, have hidden it, and you almost fancy that you had not seen it. If you enter the little bay, however, and leaving the strong current, run into the deep water under shore, you arrive at a spot which your memory will retain for many a day after.

In front of the cottage, and descending by a series of terraces, to which art has but little contributed, are a number of flower-plots, whose delicious odours float over the still water, while in every gorgeous hue are seen the camelia, the oleander, and the cactus, with the tulip, the ranunculus, and the carnation; all flourishing in a luxuriance, which care, and the favoured aspect of this sheltered nook, combine to effect. Behind and around, on either side, the dark-leaved holly, the laurustinus, and the arbutus, are seen in all the profusion of leaf and blossom a mild, moist air secures, and forming a framework, in which stands the cottage itself, its deep thatched eave, and porch of rustic-work trellised and festooned with creeping plants, almost blending its colour with the surrounding foliage. Through the open windows a peep within displays the handsomely disposed rooms, abounding in all the evidences of cultivated taste and refinement. Books, in several of the modern languages, are scattered on the table, music, drawings of the surrounding scenery, in water-colour or pencil, all that can betoken minds carefully trained and exercised, and by their very diversity showing in what a world of self-stored resources their possessors must live; the easel, the embroidery-frame, the chess-board, the half-finished manuscript, the newly-copied music, the very sprig of fern which marks the page in the little volume on Botany, slight things in themselves, but revealing so much of daily life!

If the cottage be an almost ideal representation of rustic elegance and simplicity, its situation is still more remarkable for beauty, for while Art has developed all the resources of the ground, Nature, in her own boundless profusion, has assembled here almost every ingredient of the picturesque, and as if to impart a sense of life and motion to the stilly calm, a tumbling sheet of water gushes down between the rocks, and in bounding leaps descends towards the Shannon, of which it is a tributary.

A narrow path, defended by a little railing of rustic-work, separates the end of the cottage from the deep gorge of the waterfall, but through the open window the eye can peer down into the boiling abyss of spray and foam beneath, and catch a glimpse of the bridge, which, formed of a fallen ash-tree, spans the torrent.

Traversed in every direction by paths, some galleried along the face, others cut in the substance of the rock, you can pass hours in rambling among these wild and leafy solitudes, now, lost in shade, now, emerging again, to see the great river gliding along, the white sails dotting its calm surface.

Well did Mr. Kennyfeck observe to Roland Cashel, that it was the most beautiful feature of his whole demesne, and that its possession by another not only cut him off from the Shannon in its handsomest part, but actually deprived the place of all pretension to extent and grandeur. The spreading woods of Tubbermore were, as it seemed, the background to the cottage scene, and possessed no character to show that they were the property of the greater proprietor.

The house itself was not likely to vindicate the claim the locality denied. It was built with a total disregard to aspect or architecture. It was a large four-storied edifice, to which, by way of taking off from the unpicturesque height, two wings had been planned; one of these only was finished, the other, half-built, had been suffered to fall into ruin. At the back, a high brick wall enclosed a space intended for a garden, but never put into cultivation, and now a mere nursery of tall docks and thistles, whose gigantic size almost overtopped the wall. All the dirt and slovenliness of a cottier habitant—for the house was occupied by what is misnamed "a care-taker," were seen on every hand. One of the great rooms held the family; its fellow, on the opposite side of the hall, contained a cow and two pigs; cabbage-stalks and half-rotting potato-tops steamed their pestilential vapours beneath the windows; while half-naked children added the discord, the only thing wanting to complete the sum of miserable, squalid discomfort, so sadly general among the peasantry.

If one needed an illustration of the evils of absenteeism, a better could not be found than in the ruinous, damp, discoloured building, with its falling roof and broken windows. The wide and spreading lawn, thick grown with thistles; the trees broken or barked by cattle; the gates that hung by a single hinge, or were broken up piecemeal for firing, all evidenced the sad state of neglectful indifference by which property is wrecked and a country ruined! Nor was the figure then seated on the broken door-step an unfitting accompaniment to such a scene;—a man somewhat past the middle

period of life, whose ragged, tattered dress bespoke great poverty, his worn hat drawn down over his eyes so as partly to conceal a countenance by no means prepossessing; beside him lay a long, old-fashioned musket, the stock mended by some rude country hand. This was Tom Keane, the "care-taker," who, in all the indolent enjoyment of office, sat smoking his "dudeen," and calmly surveying the process by which a young heifer was cropping the yearling shoots of an ash-tree.

Twice was his name called by a woman's voice from within the house before he took any notice of it.

"Arrah, Tom, are ye asleep?" said she, coming to the door, and showing a figure whose wretchedness was even greater than his own; while a certain delicacy of feature, an expression of a mild and pleasing character, still lingered on a face where want and privation had set many a mark. "Tom, alanah!" said she, in a tone of coaxing softness, "sure it's time to go down to the post-office. Ye know how anxious the ould man is for a letter."

"Ay, and he has rayson, too," said Tom, without stirring.

"And Miss Mary herself was up here yesterday evening to bid you go early, and, if there was a letter, to bring it in all haste."

"And what for need I make haste?" said the man, sulkily. "Is it any matther to me; whether he gets one or no. Will *I* be richer or poorer? Poorer!" added he, with a savage laugh; "be gorra! that wud be hard, anyhow. That's a comfort old Corrigan hasn't. If they turn him out of the place, then he'll know what it is to be poor!"

"Oh, Tom, acushla! don't say *that*, and he so good to us, and the young lady that was so kind when the childer had the measles, comin' twice—no, but three times a day, with everything she could think of."

"Wasn't it to please herself? Who axed her?" said Tom, savagely.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" sighed the woman. "Them's the hard words—'to please herself!'"

"Ay, just so! When ye know them people as well as me, you'll say the same. That's what they like—to make themselves great among the poor; giving a trifle here, and a penny there; making gruel for this one, and tay for that; marchin' in as if they owned the house, and turning up their noses at everything they see. 'Why don't you sweep before the door, Nancy?'—'Has the pig any right to be eating there out of the kish with the childer?'—'Ye ought to send that child to school'—and, 'What's your husband doing?'—that's the cry with them. 'What's your husband doing?—Is he getting the wheat in, or is he at the potatoes?' Tear and ages!" cried he, with a wild energy, "what does any one of themselves do

from morning till night, that they're to come spyin' after a poor man, to ax 'Is he workin' like a naygur?' But, we'll teach them something yet—a lesson they're long wanting. Listen to this."

He took, as he spoke, a soiled and ragged newspaper from his pocket, and after seeking some minutes for the place, he read, in a broken voice:

"'The days to come'—ay, here it is—'The days to come.—Let the poor man remember that there is a future before him, that, if he have but courage and boldness, will pay for the past. Turn about's fair play, my Lords and Gentlemen! You've had the pack in your own hands long enough, and dealt yourselves all the trumps. Now, give us the cards for a while. You say our fingers are dirty; so they are, with work and toil, black and dirty! but not as black as your own hearts. Hurrah! for a new deal on a brannew table; Ireland the stakes, and the players her own stout sons!' Them's fine sintiments," said he, putting up the paper.—"Fine sintiments! and the sooner we thry them the better. That's the real song," said he, reciting with energy—

> "Oh! the days to come, the days to come,
> When Erin shall have her own, boys!
> When we'll pay the debts our fathers owed,
> And reap what they have sown, boys!"

He sprang to his feet as he concluded, shouldering his musket, strode out, as if in a marching step, and repeating to himself, as he went, the last line of the song. About half an hour's brisk walking brought him to a low wicket, which opened on the high road, a little distance from which stood the small village of Derraheeny, the post-town of the neighbourhood. The little crowd which usually assembled at the passing of the coach had already dispersed, when Tom Keane presented himself at the window, and asked, in a tone of voice subdued almost to softness—

"Have you anything for Mr. Corrigan this morning, Ma'am?"

"Yes; there are two letters and a newspaper," replied a sharp voice from within. "One-and-fourpence to pay."

"She didn't give me any money, Ma'am, but Miss Mary said——"

"You can take them," interrupted the post mistress, hastily handing them out, and slamming the little window to at the same instant.

"There's more of it!" muttered Tom; "and if it was for *me* the letters was, I might sell my cow before I'd get trust for the price of them!" And with this reflection he plodded moodily homeward. Scarcely, however, had he entered the thick plantation, than he seated himself beneath a tree, and proceeded to take a careful and strict scrutiny of the two letters; carefully spelling over each address, and poising them in his hands, as if the weight

could assist his guesses as to the contents. "That's Mr. Kennyfeck's big seal. I know it well," said he, gazing on the pretentious coat of arms which emblazoned the attorney's letter. "I can make nothing of the other at all. 'Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., Tubber-beg, Derraheeny'—sorra more!" It was in vain that he held it open, lozenge fashion, to peep within—but one page only was written, and he could not see that. Kennyfeck's letter was enclosed in an envelope, so that here, too, he was balked, and at last was fain to slip the newspaper from its cover—a last resource to learn something under-hand! The newspaper did not contain anything peculiarly interesting, save in a single paragraph, which announced the intention of Roland Cashel, Esq., of Tubbermore Castle, to contest the County at the approaching General Election. "We are informed," said the writer, "on competent authority, that this gentleman intends to make the ancestral seat his chief residence in future; and that already preparations are making to render this princely mansion in every respect worthy of the vast fortune of its proprietor."

"Faith, and the 'princely mansion' requires a thing or two to make it all perfect," said Tom, with a sardonic laugh, while in a lower tone he muttered—"maybe, for all the time he'll stay there, it's not worth his while to spend the money on it." Having re-read the paragraph, he carefully replaced the paper in its cover and continued his way, not, however, towards his own home, but entering a little woodland path that led direct towards the Shannon. After passing a short distance he came to a little low edge of beech and birch, through which a neat rustic gate led and opened upon a closely-shaven lawn. The neatly-gravelled walk, the flower-beds, the delicious perfume that was diffused on every side, the occasional peeps at the eddying river, and the cottage itself, seen at intervals between the evergreens that studded the lawn, were wide contrasts to the ruinous desolation of the "Great House," and as if unwilling to feel their influence, Tom pulled his hat deeper over his brows, and never looked at either side as he advanced. The part of the cottage towards which he was approaching contained a long verandah, supported by pillars of rustic-work, within which, opening by three large windows, was the principal drawing-room. Here, now, at a small writing-table, sat a young girl, whose white dress admirably set off the graceful outline of her figure, seen within the half-darkened room: her features were pale, but beautifully regular, and the masses of her hair, black as night, which she wore twisted on the back of the head, like a cameo, gave a character of classic elegance and simplicity to the whole.

Without, and under the verandah, an old man, tall, and slightly bowed in the shoulders, walked slowly up and down. It needed not the careful

nicety of his long queue, the spotless whiteness of his cambric shirt and vest, nor the perfection of his nicely-fitting nankeen pantaloons, to bespeak him a gentleman of the past day. There was a certain *suave* gentleness in his bland look, an air of easy courtesy in his every motion, a kind of well-bred mannerism in the very carriage of his gold-headed cane, that told of a time when the graces of deportment were a study, and when our modern careless freedom had been deemed the very acme of rudeness. He was dictating, as was his wont each morning, some reminiscence of his early life, when he had served in the Body-Guard of Louis XVI., and where he had borne his part in the stormy scenes of that eventful era. The memory of that most benevolent monarch, the fascinations of that Queen whom to serve was to idolise, had sufficed to soften the hardships of a life, which from year to year pressed more heavily, and were at last, after many a struggle, impressing their lines upon a brow where age alone had never written grief.

On the morning in question, instead of rapidly pouring forth his recollections, which usually came in groups, pressing one upon the other, he hesitated often, sometimes forgetting "where he was," in his narrative, and more than once ceasing to speak altogether; he walked in reverie, and seeming deeply preoccupied.

His granddaughter had noticed this change, but cautiously abstaining from anything that might betray her consciousness, she sat, pen in hand, waiting, her lustrous eyes watching each gesture with an intensity of interest that amounted to actual suffering.

"I fear, Mary," said he, with an effort to smile, "we must give it up for to-day. The present is too strong for the past, just as sorrow is always an overmatch for joy. Watching for the post has routed all my thoughts, and I can think of nothing but what tidings may reach me from Dublin."

"You have no fears, Sir," said she, rising and drawing her arm within his, "that your application could be rejected; you ask nothing unusual or unreasonable—a brief renewal of a lease where you have expended a fortune."

"True, true, dear child. Let us, however, not look on the case with our eyes alone, but see it as others may. But here comes Tom.—Well, what news, Tom; are there letters?"

"Yes, Sir, here's two; there's one-and-fourpence to be paid."

"Let me see them," cried the old man, impatiently, as he snatched them, and hastily re-entered the house.

"Is Cathleen better to-day?" said the young lady, addressing the peasant.

"Yes, Miss, glory be to God, she's betther. Thanks to yourself and

Him. Oh, then, it's of yer beautiful face she does be dramin' every night. Says she, 'It's Miss Mary, I think, is singing to me, when I hear the birds in my sleep."

"Poor child, give her this little book for me, and say I'll come up and see her this evening, if I can. Mrs. Moore will send her the broth; I hope she'll soon be able to eat something. Good-by, Tom."

A deep-drawn heavy sigh from within the cottage here made her abruptly conclude the interview and hasten in. The door of her grandfather's little dressing-room was, however, locked, and after a noiseless effort to turn the handle, she withdrew to the drawing-room, to wait in deep anxiety for his coming.

The old man sat with his head supported on both hands, gazing steadfastly at two open letters, which lay on the table before him; had they contained a sentence of death his aspect could scarce have been more sad and sorrow-struck! One was from Mr. Kennyfeck, and ran thus:

"Dear Mr. Corrigan,

"I have had a brief conversation with Mr. Roland Cashel on the subject of your renewal, and I am grieved to say that he does not seem disposed to accede to your wishes. Entertaining, as he does, the intention to make Tubbermore his chief residence in Ireland, his desire is, I believe, to connect the farm in your holding with the demesne. This will at once explain that it is not a question of demanding a higher rent from you, but simply of carrying out a plan for the enlargement and improvement of the grounds pertaining to the 'Hall.'

"The matter is, however, by no means decided upon; nor will it be, in all probability, before you have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Cashel personally. His present intention is to visit your neighbourhood next week.

"I am, dear Sir, truly yours,

"M. Kennyfeck.

"Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., Tubber-beg Cottage."

The second letter was as follows:

"Simpkins and Green have the honour to forward for acceptance the enclosed bill for two hundred and seventeen pounds, at three months, Mr. Heneage Leicester, of New Orleans, on Mr. Corrigan.

"They are authorised also to state that Mr. Leicester's affairs have suffered considerably from the consequence of the commercial distress at N. O., and his personal property has been totally lost by the earthquake

which took place on the 11th and 12th ultimo. He therefore trusts to Mr. C——'s efforts to contribute to his aid by a greater exertion than usual, and will draw upon him for two sums of one hundred, at dates of six and nine months, which he hopes may suit his convenience, and be duly honoured. Mr. Leicester continues to hope that he may be able to visit Europe in the spring, where his great anxiety to see his daughter will call him."

"The ruin is now complete," said the old man. "I have struggled for years with poverty and privation to ward off this hour—but, like destiny, it will not be averted! Despoiled of fortune — turned from the home where I have lived from my childhood—bereft of all! I could bear up still if she were but left to me—but now, he threatens to take *her*, my child, my hope, my life! And the world will stand by him, and say, 'He is her father!' He, that broke the mother's heart—my own darling girl!—and now comes to rob me—a poor helpless old man, of all my companionship and my pride. Alas, alas! the pride, perhaps, deserves the chastisement. Poor Mary — how will she ever learn to look on him with a daughter's affection?—What a life will hers be! And this deception—how will it, how can it ever be explained? I have always said that he was dead."

Such, in broken half-sentences, were the words he spoke, while thick-coming sobs almost choked his utterance.

"This cannot be helped," said he, taking up the pen and writing his name across the bill. "So much I can meet, by selling our little furniture here; we shall need it no more, for we have no longer a home. Where to, then?"

He shook his hands in mournful despair, and walked towards the window. Mary was standing outside, in the little flower-garden, assisting the old gardener to fasten some stray tendrils of a Japonica between two trees.

"We must try and shelter this window, Ned," said she, "from the morning sun. It comes in too strongly here in Papa's library. By next summer, I hope to see a thick trellis of leaves across the whole casement."

"By next summer," repeated the old man, from within, with a trembling voice; "and who will be here to see it?"

"This little hedge, too, must be overgrown with that creeping plant we got from America, the white Liana. I want the beech to be completely hid beneath the blossoms, and they come out in May."

"In May!" said the poor old man, with an accent of inexpressible sadness, as though the very promise of spring had unfolded a deep vista of years of suffering. "But why care for the home, if she, who made its sunshine, is taken from me? What matters it where I linger on, or how, the

last few hours of a life, bereft of its only enjoyment?—she, that in my old age, renewed all the memories of my early and my happy days."

He sat down and covered his face with his hands; and when he withdrew them, the whole character and expression of the countenance had changed; a dull, meaningless look had replaced the mild and cheerful beam of his soft blue eyes; the cheeks were flattened, and the mouth, so ready with its gentle smile, now remained partly open, and slightly drawn to one side. He made an effort to speak, but a thickened guttural utterance rendered the words scarcely intelligible. He approached the window and beckoned with his hand. The next instant, pale with terror, but still composed and seeming calm, Mary was beside him.

"You are not well, dear Papa," she said, with a great effort to appear at ease. "You must lie down—here will do—on this sofa; I'll close the curtain, and send over for Tiernay; he said he should be back from Limerick this morning."

A gentle pressure of her hand to his lips, and a faint smile, seemed to assent.

She opened the window, and whispered a few words to the gardener, and then closing it, noiselessly, drew the curtain, and sat down on a low stool beside the sofa where he lay.

So still and motionless did he remain, that she thought he slept; indeed, the long-drawn breathing, and the repose of his attitude, betokened sleep.

Mary did not venture to move, but sat, one hand clasped in his, the other resting on his forehead, still and silent.

The darkened room, the unbroken silence, the figure of him in whom was centred her every thought and hope, lying sick before her, sank with a dreary weight upon her heart; and in the gloom of her sorrow dark foreboding of future evil arose, vague terrors of trials, new and hard to bear! That strange prescience, which never is wanting in great afflictions, and seems itself a Heaven-sent warning to prepare for the coming blow, revealed a time of sore trouble and calamity before her. "Let him be but spared to me," she cried, in her heart-uttered prayer, "and let me be so fashioned in spirit and temper that I may minister to him through every hour—cheering, consoling, and encouraging. Giving of *my* youth its gift of hopefulness and trust, and borrowing of *his* age its serenity and resignation. But oh, that I may not be left solitary and alone, unfriended and unsupported!" A gush of tears, the first she shed, here burst forth, and, in the transport of her grief, brought calm to her mind once more.

A low tap at the window, and a voice in whisper aroused her. "It is the doctor, Miss—Dr. Tiernay," said the gardener.

A motion to admit him was all her reply, and with noiseless step the

physican entered and approached the sofa. He felt the pulse, and listened to the respiration of the sick man, and then, withdrawing the curtain so as to let the light fall upon his features, steadily contemplated their expression. As he looked, his own countenance grew graver and sadder; and it was with an air of deep solemnity that he took Mary's hand, and led her from the room.

With a weight like lead upon her heart Mary moved away. "When did it happen?" whispered he, when he had closed the door behind them.

"Happen!" gasped she, in agony; "what do you mean?"

"I meant when—this—occurred," replied he, faltering; "was he in his usual health this morning?"

"Yes, perfectly—a little less composed—anxious about his letters—uneasy at the delay—but no more."

"You do not know if he received any unpleasant tidings, or heard anything to distress him?"

"He may have done so," answered she, sadly, "for he locked his door and read over his letters by himself. When I saw him next, he was standing at the window, and beckoning to me."

A gentle tap at the door here interrupted the colloquy, and the old housekeeper whispered, "The master, Miss, wants to spake with the doctor; he's better now."

"Oh, let me see him," cried Mary, springing towards the door. But Dr. Tiernay interposed gently, and said, "No, this might prove dangerous; remain here till I have seen and spoken with him." Mary assented by a gesture, and sat down without speaking.

"Sit down, Tiernay," said the sick man, as the doctor came to his bedside—"sit down, and let me speak while I have strength. Everything is against us, Tiernay. We are not to get the renewal: this young Mr. Cashel wants the cottage—we must turn out. I'll have to do so, even before the gale-day; but what matter about me! It's that poor child I'm thinking of——" Here he stopped, and was some minutes before he could resume. "There—read that; that will tell you all."

Tiernay took the crumpled letter, which the old man had all this while held firmly in his closed grasp, and read it.

"Well, that's bad news, isn't it?" said Corrigan; "not the bill—I don't mean that; but *he's* coming back; do you see the threat?—he's coming back again."

"How can he?" said the Doctor. "The man committed a forgery; now will he dare to return here and place his neck in a halter?"

"You forget whose evidence alone can convict him—mine; the name he

forged was mine, the sum he took was mine—nearly all I had in the world—but he has nothing to fear from me, whatever I may have to dread from *him*."

"How can he have any terror for *you?*"

"He can take *her* away; not from *me*, for she'll soon be separated by a stronger hand than his, but I can't bear to think that she'll be in his power. Tiernay, this is what is cutting into my heart now as I lie here, and leaves me no rest to think of the brief minutes before me. Tell me, is there no way to avoid this? Think of something, my old friend—take this weight off my dying heart, and my last breath will bless you."

"Are there any relations, or friends?"

"None, not one; I'm the last of the tree—the one old rotton branch left. I was thinking of a nunnery, Tiernay, one of those convents in France or the Low Countries; but even there, if he found her out, he could legally demand her to be restored to him; and he would find her, ay, that he would! There never was a thing yet that man couldn't do when he set his heart on it; and, the more the obstacles, the greater his wish I heard him say it with his own lips, that he never had any fancy for my poor Lucy, till he overheard her one day saying, that 'she never hated any one till she knew him.' From that hour, he swore to himself she should be his wife! Heaven knows if the hate was not better bestowed than the love; and yet, she did love him to the last, ay, even after cruelty and desertion—ay, after his supposed death; when she heard that he married another, and was living in splendour at Cadiz, ay, Tiernay! after all that, she told me, on her death-bed, she loved him still!"

"I think the nunnery is the best resource," said the Doctor, recalling the sick man from a theme where his emotions were already too powerfully excited.

"I believe it is," said the old man, with more of energy than before: "and I feel almost as if Providence would give me strength and health to take her there myself, and see her safe before I die. Feel that pulse now—isn't it stronger?"

"You are better, much better already," said the Doctor; "and now, keep quiet and composed. Don't speak—if it was possible, I'd say don't think—for a few hours. The worst is nigh over."

"I thought so, Tiernay. I felt it was what old Joe Henchy used to call 'a run-away knock.'" And, with a faint smile, the old man pressed his hand, and said, "Good-by."

Scarcely, however, had the Doctor reached the door, when he called him back.

"Tiernay, said he, "it's of no use telling me to lie still, and keep quiet, and the rest of it. I continue, asleep or awake, to think over what's coming. There is but one way to give me peace—give me some hope. I'll tell you now how that is to be done; but, first of all, can you spare three days from home?"

"To be sure I can; a week, if it would serve you. Where am I to go?"

"To Dublin! Tiernay. You'll have to go up there, and see this young man, Cashel, yourself, and speak to him for me. Tell him nothing of our present distress or poverty, but just let him see who it is that he is turning out of the lands where their fathers lived for hundreds of years. Tell him, that the Corrigans is the oldest stock in the whole country; that the time was, from the old square tower on Garraguin, you couldn't see a spot of ground that wasn't our own! Tell him"—and, as he spoke, his flashing eye and heightened colour showed how the theme agitated and excited him—"tell him, that if he turns us from hearth and home, it is not as if it was like some poor cotter——" He paused, his lips trembled, and the big tears burst from his eyes and rolled heavily down his face. "Oh! God forgive me for saying the words!" cried he, in an accent of deep agony. "Why wouldn't the humblest peasant that ever crouched to his meal of potatoes, beside the little turf fire of his cabin, love his home as well as the best blood in the land? No, no, Mat, its little kindness we'd deserve on such a plea as that."

"There, there, don't agitate yourself. I know what you mean, and what you'd like me to say."

"You do not," rejoined the old man, querulously, "for I haven't said it yet. Nor I can't think of it now. Ah, Mat"—here his voice softened once more into its habitual key—"that was a cruel thought of me, a while ago; and faith, Mr. Cashel might well suspect, if he heard it, that I wasn't one of the old good blood of the Corrigans, that could talk that way of the poor; but so it is. There isn't a bad trait in a man's heart that is not the twin-brother of his selfishness. And now I'll say no more; do the best you can for us, that's all. I was going to bid you tell him that we have an old claim on the whole estate, that some of the lawyers say is good—that the Crown have taken off the confiscation in the time of my great father, Phil Corrigan—but sure he wouldn't mind that; besides, that's not the way to ask a favour."

"You mustn't go on talking this way; see how hot your hand is."

"Well, maybe it will be cold enough soon! There is another thing, Mat. You must call on Murphy, with the bill of sale of the furniture and the books, and get money to meet these bills. There they are; I endorsed

them this morning. Tell Green it's no use sending me the other bills; I'll not have means to take them up, and it would be only disgracing my name for nothing to write it on them. I'll be longing to see you back again, Mat, and hear your tidings; so God bless you, and send you safe home to us."

"I'll set off to-night," said the Doctor, rising and shaking his hand; "your attack is passed over, and there's no more danger, if you'll keep quiet."

"There's another thing, Mat," said the sick man, smiling faintly, and with a strange meaning. "Call at 28, Drogheda-street, and ask the people to show you the room Con Corrigan fought the duel in with Colonel Battley. It was only twelve feet long and ten wide, a little place off the drawing-room, and the Colonel wouldn't even consent that we should stand in the corners. Look and see if the bullet is in the wall still. The old Marquis used to have it fresh painted red every year, on the anniversary of the day. Oh dear, oh dear, but they were the strange times, then! ay, and pleasant times too." And with such reflections on the past, he fell off into a dreamy half-consciousness, during which Tiernay stole from the room, and left him alone.

Faint and trembling with agitation, Mary Leicester was standing all this while at the door of the sick chamber. "Did I hear aright, Doctor?" said she; "was that his voice that sounded so cheerfully?"

"Yes, my dear Miss Mary, the peril is by, but be cautious. Let him not speak so much, even with you. This is a sweet, quiet spot. Heaven grant he may long enjoy it."

Mary's lips muttered some words inaudibly, and they parted. She sat down alone, in the little porch under the eave; the day was a delicious one in autumn, calm, mellow, and peaceful; a breeze, too faint to ripple the river, stirred the flowers, and shook forth their odour. The cottage, the leafy shade, through which the tempered sunlight fell in fanciful shapes upon the gravel—the many-coloured blossoms of the rich garden—the clear and tranquil river—the hum of the distant waterfall—they were all such sights and sounds as breathe of home and home's happiness, and so had she felt them to be till an unknown fear found entrance into her heart, and spread its darkness there. What a terrible sensation comes with a first sorrow.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MR. LINTON REVEALS HIS DESIGNS.

With fame and fortune on the cast,
He never rose a winner:
And learned to know himself at last,
"A miserable sinner."

BELL.

It was about ten days or a fortnight after the great Kennyfeck dinner, when all the gossip about its pretension, dulness, and bad taste had died away, and the worthy guests so bored by the festivity began to wonder "when they would give another," that a gentleman sat at breakfast in one of those large, dingy-looking, low-ceilinged apartments which are the choice abodes of the Vice-Regal staff in the Castle of Dublin. The tawdry and time-discoloured gildings, the worn and faded silk hangings, the portraits of bygone state-councillors and commanders-in-chief, grievously riddled by rapier-points and pistol-shots, were not without an emblematic meaning of the past glories of that seat of Government, now so sadly fallen from its once high and palmy state.

Although still a young man, the present occupant of the chamber appeared middle-aged, so much had dissipation and excess done the work of time on his constitution. A jaded, wearied look, a sleepy, indolent expression of the eye, certain hard lines about the angles of the mouth, betokened one who played a high game with life, and rarely arose a winner. Although his whole appearance bespoke birth and blood rather than intellect or ability, there was enough in his high and squarely-shaped head, his deep dark eye, and his firm, sharply-cut mouth, to augur that incapacity could not be reckoned among the causes of any failures he incurred in his career. He was in every respect the *beau idéal* of that strange solecism in our social code, "the younger son." His brother, the Duke of Derwent, had eighty thousand a year. *He* had exactly three hundred. His Grace owned three houses, which might well be called palaces, besides a grouse lodge in the Highlands, a yachting station at Cowes, and a villa at Hyères in France. My Lord was but too happy to be the possessor of the three cobwebbed chambers of a Vice-Regal Aide-de-camp, and enjoy the pay of his troop without joining his regiment.

Yet these two men were reared exactly alike! As much habituated to

every requirement and luxury of wealth as his elder brother, the younger suddenly discovered that, once beyond the shadow of his father's house, all his worldly resources were something more than what the cook, and something less than the valet, received. He had been taught one valuable lesson, however, which was, that as the State loves a rich aristocracy, it burdens itself with the maintenance of all those who might prove a drain on its resources, and that it is ever careful to provide for the Lord Georges and Lord Charleses of its noble houses. To this provision he believed he had a legal claim: at all events, he knew it to be a right uncontested by those less highly born.

The system which excludes men from the career of commerce, in compensation opens the billiard-room, the whist-table, and the betting-ring, and many a high capacity has been exercised in such spheres as these, whose resources might have won honour and distinction in very different fields of enterprise. Whether Lord Charles Frobisher knew this, and felt that there was better in him, or whether his successes were below his hopes, certain is it, he was a depressed, dejected man, who lounged through life in a languid indolence, caring for nothing, not even himself.

There was some story of an unfortunate attachment, some love affair, with a very beautiful but portionless cousin, who married a Marquis, to which many ascribed the prevailing melancholy of his character, but they who remembered him as a schoolboy said he was always shy and reserved, and saw nothing strange in his bearing as a man. The breakfast-table, covered with all that could stimulate appetite, and yet, with all untasted, was not a bad emblem of one who with many a gift to win an upward way, yet lived on in all the tawdry insignificance of a Court Aide-de-camp. A very weak glass of claret and water, with a piece of dry toast, formed his meal, and even these stood on the corner of a writing-table, at which he sat, rising sometimes to look out of the window, or pace the room with slow, uncertain steps. Before him lay an unfinished letter, which, to judge from the slow progress it made, and the frequent interruptions to its course, seemed to occasion some difficulty in the composition, and yet the same epistle began "My dear Sydney," and was addressed to his brother. Here it is:

"My dear Sydney,

"I suppose, from not hearing from you some weeks back, that my last, which I addressed to the Clarendon, has never reached you, nor is it of any consequence. It would be too late now to ask you about Scott's horses. Cobham told us how you stood yourself, and that was enough to guide the poor devils here with their poneys and fifties. We all got a squeeze on the 'Mare.' I hear you won seven thousand besides the stakes. I hope the re-

port may be true. Is Raucus in training for the Spring Meeting or not? If so, let me have some trifle on him in your own book.

"I perceive you voted on Brougham's amendment against our people; I conclude you were right, but it will make them very stubborn with me about the exchange. N—— has already remarked upon what he calls the 'intolerable independence of some Noble Lords.' I wish I knew the clue to your proceeding—are you at liberty to give it? I did not answer the question in your last letter.—Of course I am tired of Ireland, but as the alternatives are a 'Compound in Calcutta, or the Government House, Quebec,' I may as well remain where I am. I don't know that a Staff-officer, like Madeira, improves by a sea voyage.

"You say nothing of Georgina, so that I hope her chest is better, and that Nice may not be necessary. I believe, if climate were needed, you would find Lisbon, or rather Cintra, better than any part of Italy, and possessed of one great advantage—few of our rambling countrymen. N—— commended your haunch so highly, and took such pains to record his praises, that I suspect he looks for a repetition of the favour. If you *are* shooting bucks, perhaps you would send him a quarter."

Two sentences, half finished and erased, here showed that the writer experienced a difficulty in continuing. Indeed, his flurried manner as he resumed the letter proved it. At last he went on.

"I hate asking favours, my dear Sydney, but there is one which, if not positively repugnant to you to grant, will much oblige me. There is a young *millionnaire* here, a Mr. Cashel, wishes to be a member of your Yacht Club, and as I have given a promise to make interest in his behalf with you, it would be conferring a great obligation on me were I to make the request successfully. So far as I can learn, there is no reason against his admission, and as regards property, many reasons in his favour. If you can do this for me, then, you will render me a considerable service.

"Of course I do not intend to fix any acquaintanceship upon you, nor in any other way, save the bean in the ballot-box, and a civil word in proposing, inflict you with what Rigby calls 'Protective Duties.' I should have been spared in giving you this trouble but for Tom Linton, who, with his accustomed good nature, at other men's cost, suggested the step to Cashel, and told him, besides, that my brother was Vice-Admiral of the Yacht Fleet.

"If Emily wants a match for the chesnut pony, I know of one here perfect in every respect, and to be had very cheap. Let me know about this soon; and also the club matter, as I have promised to visit Cashel at his country-house; and in case of refusal on your part, this would be unpleasant. Thanks for your invitation for Christmas, which I cannot accept of. Hope

and Eversham are both on leave, so that I must remain here. N—— continues to ask you here; but my advice is, as it has ever been, not to come. The climate detestable—the houses dull and dirty; no shooting, nor any hunting, at least with such horses as you are accustomed to ride.

"I am glad you took my counsel about the mortgage. There is no property here worth seventeen years' purchase, in the present aspect of politics. Love to Jane and the girls, and believe me ever yours,

"CHARLES FROBISHER."

This task completed, he turned to the morning papers; which, with a mass of tradesmen's bills, notes, and cards of invitation, littered the table. He had not read long, when a deep-drawn yawn from the further end of the room aroused him, and Frobisher arose and walked towards a sofa, on which was stretched a man, somewhat about the middle of life, but whose bright eye and fresh complexion showed little touch of time. His dress, slightly disordered, was a dinner costume, and rather inclined towards over-particularity; at least, the jewelled buttons of his vest and shirt evinced a taste for display that seemed not ill to consort with the easy effrontery of his look.

Taking his watch from his pocket he held it to his ear, saying, "There is an accomplishment, Charley, I've never been able to acquire—to wind my watch at supper-time. What hour is it?"

"Two," said the other, laconically.

"By Jove! how I must have slept. Have you been to bed?"

"Of course. But, I'd swear, with less success than you have had on that old sofa. I scarcely closed my eyes for ten minutes together."

"That downy sleep only comes of a good conscience and a heart at ease with itself," said the other. "You young gentlemen, who lead bad lives, know very little about the balmy repose of the tranquil mind."

"Have you forgotten that you were to ride out with Lady Cecilia this morning?" said Frobisher, abruptly.

"Not a bit of it. I even dreamed we were cantering together along the sands, where I was amusing her Ladyship with some choice morceaux of scandal from that set in society she professes to hold in such horror that she will not receive them at court, but for whose daily sayings and doings she has the keenest zest."

"Foster is gone with her," rejoined Lord Charles, "and I suspect she is just as well pleased. Before this he has told her everything about our late sitting, and the play, and the rest of it!"

"Of course he has; and she is dying to ask Mr. Softly, the young chaplain's advice, whether rooting us all out would not be a 'good work.'"

"Since when have you become so squeamish about card-playing, Mr. Linton?"

"I? Not in the least! I'm only afraid that some of my friends may turn to be so, when they hear of my successes. You know what happened to Wycherley, when he got that knack of always turning up a King? Some one asked Ruxton what was to be done about it. 'Is it certain?' said he. 'Perfectly certain; we have seen him do it a hundred times!' 'Then back him,' said old Ruxton; 'that's my advice to you.'" As he said this, he drew a chair towards the table, and proceeded to fill out a cup of chocolate. "Where do you get these anchovies, Charley? Burke has got some, but not half the size."

"They are ordered for the household. Lawson can tell you all about 'em," said the other, carelessly. "But, I say, what bets did you book on Laplander?"

"Took him against the field for seven hundred even."

"A bad bet then—I call it a very bad bet."

"So should I, if I didn't know Erebus is dead lame."

"I've seen a horse run to win with a contracted heel before now," said Lord Charles, with a most knowing look.

"So have I! but not on stony ground. No! no! you may depend upon it!"

"I don't want to depend upon it," said the other, snappishly. "I shall not venture five pounds on the race. I remember once something of an implicit reliance on a piece of information of the kind."

"Well! you know how that happened. I gave Hilyard's valet fifty pounds to get a peep at his master's betting-book, and the fellow told Hilyard, who immediately made up a book express, and let us all in for a smart sum. I am sure I was the heaviest loser in the affair."

"So you ought, too. The contrivance was a very rascally one; and deserved its penalty."

"The expression is not parliamentary, my Lord," said Linton, with a slight flushing of the cheek, "and so I must call you to order."

"Is Turcoman to run?" asked Lord Charles, negligently.

"No! I have persuaded Cashel to buy him, and he has taken him out of training."

"Well, you really go very straightforward in your work, Linton. I must say, you are as plucky a rogue as I've ever heard of. Pray, now, how do you manage to keep up your influence over that youth? he always appears to me to be a rash-headed, wilful kind of fellow there would be no guiding."

"Simply, by always keeping him in occupation. There are people like spavined horses, and one must always get them warm in their work, and they never show the blemish. Now, I have been eternally alongside of Cashel. One day, buying horses—another, pictures—another time, it was furniture—carriages—saddlery—till we have filled that great old house of the ex-Chancellor's with an assemblage of objects, living and inanimate, it would take a month to chronicle."

"Some kind friend may open his eye to all this one of these days, Master Linton—and then——"

"By that time," said Linton, "his clairvoyance will be too late. Like many a man I've known, he'll be a capital judge of claret when his cellar has been emptied."

"You were a large winner last night, Linton?"

"Twelve hundred and fifty. It might have been double the amount, but I've taken a hint from Splasher's Physiology. He says nothing encourages a plethora like small bleedings. And you Charley; what did *you* do?"

"Sixty pounds!" replied he, shortly. "I never venture out of my depth."

"And you mean to infer that *I* do, my Lord," said Linton, trying to smile, while evidently piqued by the remark. "Well, I plead guilty to the charge. I have a notion in my head that seven feet of water drowns a man just as effectually as seven hundred fathoms in the blue Atlantic. Now *you* know, as well as *I*, that neither of us could afford to lose sixty pounds thrice running, so let us not talk of venturing out of our depth; which, I take it, would be to paddle in very shallow water indeed."

For an instant it seemed as if Lord Charles would have given an angry reply to this sally; but, as hastily checking the emotion, he walked to the window, and appeared to be lost in thought; while Linton continued his breakfast with all the zest of a hungry man.

"I'll give up play altogether," said Frobisher. "That I've resolved upon. This will go abroad, rely upon it. Some of the papers will get hold of it, and we shall see some startling paragraphs about—'Recent Discoveries in the Vice-Regal Household'—'Nefarious System of High Play at the Castle,' and so on. Now, it's all very well for you, who neither care who's in or out, or hold any appointment here; but, remember, there are others—myself, for instance—who have no fancy for this kind of publicity."

"In the first place," interrupted Linton, "there is no danger; and, in the second, if there were, it's right well remunerated. Your appointment here, with all its contingent advantages, of which, not to excite your blushes, we

shall say nothing, is some three or four hundred a year. Now, a lucky evening, and courage to back the luck—a quality, by the way, I never yet found in one Englishman in a hundred—is worth this twice or thrice told. Besides, remember, that this wild bull of the Prairies has come of himself into our hunting-grounds. If *we* don't harpoon him, somebody else will. A beast of such fat on the haunches is not going to escape scot free; and lastly, by falling into good hands, he shall have the advantage of being cut up artistically, and not mauled and mangled by the rude fingers of the ignorant. Faith, as for myself, I think I richly merit all the spoils I shall obtain!"

"As how, pray?" asked Lord Charles, languidly.

"In the first place, to speak of the present—I have ridden out with him—sat beside him on the box of his drag—he is seen with me in public, and has been heard to call me 'Linton,' on the ride at Dycer's. My tradespeople have become his tradespeople. The tailor who reserved his masterstroke of genius for me, now shares his favours with him. In fact, Charley, we are one. Secondly, as regards the future, see from what perils I shall rescue him. He shall not marry Livy Kennyfeck—he shall not go into Parliament for the Liberal interest—nor for any interest, if I can help it—he shall not muddle away a fine fortune in fattening Durham bulls, and Berkshire boars; neither shall he excel in rearing mangel-wurzel or beetroot. I'll teach him to have a soul above sub-soiling, and a spirit above green crops. He shall not fall into the hands of Downie Meek, and barter his birthright for a Whig baronetcy; neither shall he be the victim of right honourable artifices, and marry a Lady Juliana, or Cecilia. In fine, I'll secure him from public meetings, and agricultural societies, twaddling dinners, horticultural breakfasts, the Irish Academy, and Mrs. White."

"These are great deservings indeed," said Lord Charles, affectedly.

"So they are," said the other; "nor do I believe there is another man about town could pilot the channel but myself. It is only reasonable, then, if I save the craft, that I should claim the salvage. Now, the next point is, will you be one of the crew? I'll take you with pleasure, but there's no impressment. All I ask is secrecy, whether you say yea or nay."

"Let me hear what the service is to be like."

"Well, we shall first of all cruise—confound metaphors—let us talk plainly. Cashel has given me a *carte blanche* to fill his house with guests and good things. The company and the *cuisine* are both to be among my attributions, and I intend that we should do the thing right royally. Selection and exclusiveness are, of course, out of the question. There are so many cock-tails to run—there can be no disqualification. Our savage friend, in fact, insists on asking everybody he sees, and we are lucky if we escape

the Infantry and the Junior Bar. Here's the list—a goodly catalogue truly, and such a *macédoine* of incongruities has been rarely assembled, even at old Kennyfeck's dinner-table."

"Why, I see few others than the people we met there t'other day."

"Not many; but please to remember that even a country-house has limits, and that some of the guests, at least, must have separate rooms. To be serious, Charley, I have misused the King's press damnably; we have such a party as few have ever witnessed. There are the Kilgoffs, the Whites, the Hamiltons, along with the Clan Kennyfeck, the Ridleys, and Mathew Hannigan, Esquire, of Bally-Hannigan, the new Member of Parliament for Dunrone, and the last convert to the soothing doctrines of Downie Meek."

"Is Downie coming?" lisped the Aide-de-camp.

"Ay, and his daughter too. He wrote one of his velvety epistles, setting forth the prayer of his petition, in favour of 'a little girl, yet only in the nursery.'"

"Yes, yes; I know all that. Well, I'm not sorry. I like Jemmy. She is a confounded deal better than her father, and is a capital weight to put on a young horse, and a very neat hand too. Who next? Not the Dean, I hope."

"No; we divided on the Dean, and carried his exclusion by a large majority. Mrs. Kennyfeck was, I believe, alone in the lobby."

"Glad of that! No one can expect an Irish visit in the country without rain, and he's an awful fellow to be caged with, when out-o'-door work is impracticable."

"Then there are the Latrobes and the Heatherbys; in fact, the old set, with a Polish fellow, of course a Count—Deuroominski; a literary tourist, brought by Mrs. White, called Howle; and a small little dark man, one used to see two seasons ago, that sings the melodies and tells Irish legends —I forget the name."

"Promiscuous and varied, certainly; and what is the order of the course Are there to be games, rural sports, fireworks, soaped pigs, and other like intellectualities?"

"Precisely; a kind of coming-of-age thing on a grand scale. I have engaged Somerton's *chef;* he has just left his place. Gunter sends over one of his people; and Dubos, of the Cadran Bleu, is to forward two hampers per week from Paris. Hicksley is also to provide all requisites for private theatricals. In fact, nearly everything has been attended to, save the horse department; I wish you'd take that under your protectorate; we shall want any number of screws, for saddle and harness, with drags, breaks, and machines of all kinds, to drive about in. Do, pray, be master of the horse."

"Thanks; but I hate and detest trouble of all kinds. So far as selling you two of my own—a wall-eye and a bone-spavin included—I consent."

"Agreed; everything in your stable carries a side-saddle, that I know, so name your figure."

"A hundred; they'd bring close on fifty at Dycer's any day; so, I am not exorbitant, as these are election times."

"There's the ticket, then," said Linton, taking out a cheque-book and filling up a leaf for the sum, which he tore out and presented to Lord Charles.

"What! has he really so far installed you as to——"

"As to give blank cheques," said the other, holding up the book in evidence, where "Roland Cashel" was written on a vast number of pages. "I never knew the glorious sense of generosity before, Charley. I have heard a great deal about liberal sentiments, and all that kind o' thing; but now, for the first time, do I feel the real enjoyment of indulgence. To understand this liberty aright, however, a man must have a squeeze—such a squeeze as I have experienced myself once or twice in life; and then, my boy, as the song says,"—here, with a bold rattling air, he sang to a popular melody—

"When of luck you've no card up,
And feel yourself 'hard-up,'
And cannot imagine a method to win;
When 'friends' take to shy you,
And Jews to deny you,
How pleasant to dip in another man's tin.

"Not seeking or craving,
Some pettyful saving,
You draw as you like upon Drummond or Gwynne
And while pleasure pursuing,
You know there's no ruing
The cost that comes out of another man's tin.

Eh, Charley! that's the toast we 'Chevaliers Modernes' should drink before the health of the Royal Family."

"The Royal Family!" sneered Frobisher; "I never observed that loyalty was a very remarkable trait in your character."

"The greater injustice yours, then," said Linton. "I conceived a very early attachment to Monarchy, on learning the importance of the King at écarté."

"I should have thought the Knave had more of your sympathy," said the other.

"Inasmuch as he follows the Queen, I suppose," said Linton, good

humouredly, laughing; "but come, don't look so grave, old fellow; had I been a political '*intriguant*' and devoted these goodly talents of mine to small state rogueries in committees and adjourned debates, I'd have been somebody in these dull times of aspiring mediocrity, but as my ambitions have never soared beyond the possession of what may carry on the war of life, irrespective of its graver honours, you moralists—Heaven bless the mark!—rather regard me distrustfully. Now, let me tell you a secret, and it's one worth the knowing. There's nothing so fatal to a man's success in life as 'a little character;' a really great one may dispense with every kind of ability and acquirement: get your name once up in our English public, and you may talk, preach, and write the most rank nonsense with a very long impunity; but a little character, like a small swimming bladder, only buoys you up long enough to reach deep water, and be drowned. To journey the road of life with this, is to 'carry weight.' Take my advice—I give it in all sincerity—you are as poor a man as myself; there are thousands of luxuries you can afford yourself, but this is too costly an indulgence for a small fortune. Your 'little character' is a kind of cankering conscience, not strong enough to keep you out of wickedness, but sufficiently active to make you miserable afterwards. An everlasting suggester of small scruples, it leaves a man no time for anything but petty expedients and devices, and you hang suspended all your life between desire and denial, without the comfort of the one or the credit of the other."

"Is the sermon over?" said Lord Charles, rather affectedly than really feeling tired of the "tirade," "or are you only rehearsing the homily before you preach it to Roland Cashel?"

"Quite wrong there, my Lord," said Linton, with the same imperturbable temper. "Cashel is rich enough to afford himself any caprice, even a good name, if he like it. You and I must take ours as we do railway tickets, any number that's given us!" And with this speech, delivered in an air of perfect quietude, but still emphatically slow, he settled his hat on before the glass, arranged his whiskers, and walked away.

Lord Charles, for a second, seemed disposed to make an angry reply, but correcting the impulse, he walked to the window in silence. "I have half a mind to spoil your game, my worthy friend," muttered he, as the other passed across the court-yard; "one word to Cashel would do it. To be sure it is exploding the mine with one's own hand to the fusee; that's to be thought of." And, so saying, he lay down on the sofa to ruminate

## CHAPTER XV.

### AT THE GAMING TABLE.

**Not half so skilled in means and ways,**
**The "hungry Greek" of classic days,**
**His cards with far less cunning plays,**
**Than eke, our modern sharper!**

When Linton had determined within himself to make Cashel "his own," his first care was to withdraw him from the daily society of the Kennyfecks, by whose familiar intercourse a great share of influence was already enjoyed over their young guest. This was not so easy a task as he had at first imagined. Cashel had tasted of the pleasant fascination of easy intimacy with two young and pretty girls, eagerly bent on being agreeable to him. He was in all the full enjoyment of that rare union, the pleasure of being at home and yet an honoured guest; and it was only when Linton suggested that late hours and irregular habits were but little in accordance with the decorous propriety of a family, that Cashel yielded, and consented to remove his residence to a great furnished house in "Stephen's Green," where some bygone Chancellor once held his state.

Linton well knew that if "Necessity" be the mother of invention, "Propinquity" is the father of love; that there is nothing so suggestive of the tender passion as that lackadaisical state to which lounging at home contributes, and the chance meetings with a pretty girl. The little intercourse on the stairs going down to breakfast, the dalliance in the conservatory, the chit-chat before dinner, are far more formidable than all the formal meetings under the blaze of wax-lights, and amid the crush of white satin.

"If I leave him much longer among them," said he to himself, "he'll marry one of these girls; and then adieu to all influence over him! No more écarté—no more indiscriminate purchases of everything I propose—no more giving 'the odds against the field.' A wife and a wife's family are heavy recognisances against a bachelor friend's counsels."

Cashel was really sorry to leave the house where his time had passed so pleasantly. The very alternation of his interest regarding the two sisters had kept his mind in a state of pleasant incertitude, now, seeing something to prefer in this, now in that, while, at the same time, suggesting on their part greater efforts to please and amuse him. If Mr. Kennyfeck deemed Cashel's

removal a very natural step, and one which his position in some sort demanded, not so his wife. She inveighed powerfully against the dangerous intimacy of Linton, and the ruinous consequences such an ascendancy would lead to. "You should tell Mr. Cashel who this man is," said she, imperiously.

"But that is exactly what nobody knows," meekly responded Mr. Kennyfeck.

"Pshaw, every one knows all about him! You can tell him how he ruined young Rushbrook, and in less than two years left him without a shilling."

Mr. Kennyfeck shook his head, as though to say that the evidence was by no means conclusive on that count.

"Yes, you may affect not to believe it," said she, angrily, "but didn't George Lawson see the cheque for eight thousand paid to Linton at Latouche's bank, and that was one evening's work."

"There was a great deal of high play, I've heard, among them."

"Oh, indeed! you've heard that much," said she, scornfully; "probably, too, you heard how Linton paid seventy thousand pounds for part of the Dangwood estate—he, that had not sixpence three months previous. I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, that you have laboured to very little purpose to establish this young man's claim, if you are to stand by and see his property portioned among sharpers. There! don't start and look so frightened; there's nobody listening, and if there were, too, I don't care. I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, that if it weren't for your foolish insufficiency, Cashel would propose for Olivia. Yes! the thing is plain as possible. He fell in love with her the very night he arrived. Every one saw it. Jane Lyons told me how it was remarked the day the company dined here. Leonard told all over Dublin how she chose the diamonds, and that Cashel distinctly referred to her before buying them. Then, they were seen together driving through the streets. What more would you have? And now you suffer all this to be undone for the selfish objects of Mr. Linton; but I tell you, Mr. Kennyfeck, if you're a fool, I am not."

"But really I don't see——"

"You don't see! I'm sure you do not. You'd see, however, if it were a case for an action in the Courts—a vulgar appeal to twelve greasy jurors—you'd see then. There is quite enough for a shabby verdict! But I regard the affair very differently, and I tell you frankly, if I see Cashel draw off in his attentions, I'll send for my cousin O'Gorman. I believe you can assure your young client that he'll find there's no joking with him."

Now this was the "most unkindest cut of all;" for if report spoke truly, Mr. Kennyfeck had himself experienced from that gentleman a species

of moral force impulsion which left the most unpleasant reminiscences behind.

"I beseech you to remember, Mrs. Kennyfeck, that this agency is one of the best in Ireland."

"So much the more reason to have the principal your son-in-law."

"I'd have you to reflect how little success coercion is like to have with a person of Mr. Cashel's temper."

"Peter is the best shot in Ballinasloe," rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, sententiously.

Mr. Kennyfeck nodded a full assent; but seemed to hazard a doubt as to the efficiency of such skill.

"I repeat, Sir, I'll send for him. Peter knows pretty well what ought to be done in such matters, and it's a comfort to think there is some spirit on one side of the family, at least." Whether to afford a practical illustration, albeit negatively, or that he dreaded a continuance of the controversy, Mr. Kennyfeck feigned a business appointment, and retired, leaving his spouse to ponder over her threat, and resolve with herself as to the advantage of Peter's alliance.

While this conjugal discussion engaged Papa and Mamma, Cashel was endeavouring to explain to the fair daughters the reasons for his departure, affecting to see that the multiplicity of his engagements and duties required a step which he owned was far from agreeable to his feelings.

"I suspected how soon you would weary of us," said Olivia, in a half whisper.

"We ought to have remembered, Livy," said the elder sister, "how little would our claims upon Mr. Cashel appear, when confronted with those of a higher station in the world."

"I assure you, you wrong both yourselves and me. I never——"

"Oh, I'm certain you never imagined this step. I can well believe, that if it were not for advice—not very disinterested, perhaps—you would have still condescended to regard this as your home."

"If I suspected that this removal would in the least affect the sentiments I entertain for my kind friends here, or in any way alter those I trust they feel for me, I'd never have adopted, or, having adopted, never execute it."

"We are really very much to blame, Mr. Cashel," said Olivia, bashfully, "in suffering our feelings to sway you on a matter like this. It was only too kind of you to come here at first; and perhaps even yet you will come occasionally to see us."

"Yes, Mr. Cashel, Livy is right; we are very selfish in our wishes, and very inconsiderate besides. Your position in the world requires a certain mode of living, a certain class of acquaintances, which are not ours. It is

far better, then, that we should resign ourselves to an interruption, than wait for an actual breach of intimacy."

Cashel was totally at a loss to see how his mere change of residence could possibly imply a whole train of altered feelings and relations, and was about to express his astonishment on that score, when Linton's phaeton drove up to the door, according to an appointment they had made the day before, to breakfast with the officers of a regiment quartered a short distance from town.

"There is your *friend*, Mr. Cashel," said Miss Kennyfeck, with a marked emphasis on the word. Cashel muttered something about a rendezvous, and took up his hat, when a servant entered to request he would favour Mr. Kennyfeck with a brief interview before going out.

"Are we to see you at dinner to-day?" said Olivia, languidly.

"I hope so. Mrs. Kennyfeck has been kind enough to ask me, and I hope to have the pleasure."

"Will Mr. Linton give leave?" said Miss Kennyfeck, laughing; and then, seeing a cloud on Cashel's brow, added, "I meant, if you had made no appointment with him."

"I'm self-willed enough to follow my own bent generally," said he, abruptly, and left the room.

"You owe that gentleman a heavy grudge, Livy," said Miss Kennyfeck, as she approached the window and looked out.

"Who do you mean, dear?"

"Mr. Linton. Were it not for him, I half think you might have succeeded."

"I really cannot comprehend you," cried the younger, with well-assumed astonishment.

"Of course not, my dear. Still, it was a difficult game, even if left all to yourself. He was always likely to smash the tackle at the moment when almost caught. There, don't look so puzzled, dear; I was only following out a little reverie—that's all."

Meanwhile Cashel hastily descended the stairs, not over good-humouredly commenting on Mr. Kennyfeck's ill-chosen moment for a business conversation. "I can only stay a few minutes, or rather seconds," cried he, as he opened the door of the study; and then checked himself as he perceived a short, stout, elderly man, of venerable appearance, who rose respectfully from his chair as he came in.

"Doctor Tiernay—Mr. Cashel," said Kennyfeck, presenting the stranger. "I have taken the liberty to delay you, Sir, since it would be a great convenience if you could accord this gentleman a brief hearing at present; he has come above a hundred miles to crave it, and must leave Dublin by the afternoon mail."

"Without it be Mr. Cashel's pleasure to detain me," said the Doctor, submissively.

"He is a tenant of your Tubbermore estate, Sir," resumed Kennyfeck, "a very near neighbour."

"I regret that I am pressed for time at this moment, Sir," said Cashel, drawing on his gloves impatiently; "but I believe it is the less consequence, inasmuch as I really know nothing—absolutely nothing—and you, Mr. Kennyfeck, know everything about that property, and are by far the best person to hear and decide upon this gentleman's proposition, whatever it be."

"It is a case that must be decided by yourself, Sir," said the Doctor. "It is neither a matter of law nor right, but a simple question of whether you will do an act of great kindness to the oldest tenant on your property, a man who, now overtaken by years and sickness, may not, perhaps, be alive at my return, to hear of your benevolence."

"It is about this renewal, Sir," interposed Kennyfeck, who saw Cashel's increasing impatience to be away. "Mr. Corrigan's lease expires on the 25th."

"He is now struck by paralysis," interrupted the Doctor; "and his only prayer is to be suffered to die beneath the roof where he has lived for fifty years."

"A tenant at will," interposed Kennyfeck.

"Gracious Heaven! how could he suppose I should dream of dispossessing him?" cried Cashel. "Of course, Sir, the house is his own so long as he pleases to hold it. Tell him so. Mr. Kennyfeck will tell him from me, that he need not give the matter another thought. I am sincerely grieved that it should have already caused him so much anxiety."

"Ah, Sir," cried the Doctor, while two very dubious drops twinkled in his eyes, "you are, indeed, worthy of the good fortune that has befallen you. My poor old friend will bless you, with a prouder heart in his belief in human nature, than even his gratitude could suggest. Farewell, Sir, and may you long live to be as happy as you know how to make others."

With an impulse of irrepressible warmth the old man seized Cashel's hand in both his own, and pressed it cordially, when the door suddenly opened, and Linton, dressed in a riding costume, appeared.

"What, Roland, at business so early. Do you know you're an hour behind time?"

"I do; but I couldn't help it—in fact, this was unexpected——"

"It was an act of benevolence, Sir, detained Mr. Cashel," interrupted the Doctor. "I believe no appointment can be broken with a safer apology."

"Ho! ho!" said Linton, throwing up his eyebrows, as if he suspected a snare to his friend's simplicity. "Which of the Missions to convert the Blacks, or what family of continuous twins are you patronising?"

"Good-by, Sir," said the Doctor, turning towards Cashel. "I'd ask your pardon for the liberty I have already taken with you, if I were not about to transgress again." Here he looked Linton fully in the face. "Mr. Cashel has done a kind and worthy action this morning, Sir; but if he does many more such, and keep your company, he is not only a good man, but the strongest principled one I ever met with."

As the last word was uttered, the door closed after him, and he was gone.

"So then, I'm the Mephistopheles to your Faust," said Linton, laughing heartily; "but what piece of credulous benevolence has cost you this panegyric and me this censure?"

"Oh, a mere trifle," said Cashel, preparing to leave—"a simple grant of renewal to an old tenant on my estate."

"Only that," said Linton, affecting the coolest indifference, while by a keen glance at Kennyfeck he revealed a profound consciousness of his friend's simplicity.

"Nothing more, upon my honour; that little cottage of Tubber-beg."

"Not that fishing lodge beside the river, in an angle of your own demesne?" asked Linton, eagerly.

"The same—why, what of it?"

"Nothing, save that your magnanimity is but one-sided, since only so late as Thursday last, when we looked over the map together, you gave me that cottage until such time as you should include the farm within the demesne."

"By Jupiter, and so I did!" exclaimed Cashel, while a flush of shame covered his face and forehead; "what a confounded memory I have. What is to be done?"

"Oh, never fret about it," said Linton, taking his arm, and leading him away. "The thing is easily settled. What do I want with a cottage? The old gentleman is, doubtless, a far more rural personage than I should prove. Let us not forget Aubrey's breakfast, which, if we wait much longer, will be a luncheon. The ladies well, Mr. Kennyfeck?" This was the first time he had noticed that gentleman.

"Quite well, Mr. Linton," said he, bowing politely.

"Pray present my respects. By the way, you don't want a side-saddle horse, do you?"

"I thank you, we are supplied."

"What a pity! I've got such a grey, with that swinging low cantering action Miss Kennyfeck likes; she rides so well! I wish she'd try him."

A shake of the head and a bland smile intimated a mild refusal.

"Inexorable father! Come, Cashel, you shall make the *amende* for having given away my cottage; you must buy Reginald, and make him a present to the lady."

"Agreed," said Cashel; "send him over to-day; he's mine, or rather Miss Kennyfeck's. Nay, Sir, really I will not be opposed. Mr. Kennyfeck, I insist."

The worthy attorney yielded, but not without reluctance, and saw them depart, with grave misgivings that the old Doctor's sentiment was truly spoken, and that Linton's companionship was a most unhappy accident.

"I must get into Parliament," said Linton, as he seated himself beside Cashel in the phaeton, "if it were only to quote you as one of that much-belied class, the Irish Landlord. The man who grants renewals of his best land on terms contracted three hundred years ago, is very much wanting just now. What a sensation it will create in the House, when they cry 'Name, name,' and I reply that I am under a positive personal injunction not to name, and then Sharman Crawford, or one of that set, rises and avers that he believed the Honourable and Learned Gentleman's statement to be perfectly unfounded. Amid a deluge of 'Ohs!' I stand up and boldly declare that further reserve is no longer possible, and that the gentleman whom I am so proud to call my friend is Roland Cashel, Esq., of Tubbermore. There's immortality for you, for that evening at any rate. You'll be toasted at Bellamy's, at supper, and by the white-headed old gentlemen who sit in the window at the Carlton."

"You'll not hint that I had already made a present of the lands when I displayed so much munificence," said Cashel, smiling.

"Not a syllable; but I'll tell the secret to the Opposition, if you ever grow restive," said Linton, with a laugh, in which, had Roland studied Lavater, he might have read a valuable lesson.

"*A propos* of Parliament, Kennyfeck persists in boring me about it, and that Mr. Downie Meek seems to have it at heart that I am to represent something or somebody, well knowing, the while, that I cannot possibly be supposed to understand anything of the interests whereon I should be called to vote and legislate."

"That's not so much consequence," said Linton; "you'd find a very strong section of the House very like yourself, but the thing would bore you; you would neither like the fatigue nor the slavery of it; and, positively, there is no excitement, save for the half-dozen who really contest the race. Meek, and others of the same stamp, will tell you that property should be represented in the Legislature. I agree fully with the sentiment, so it should. So also should a man's rents be collected, but that's no reason

he should be his own agent, when he can find another, far more capable, ready for office.—Touch that off-side horse, he'll skulk his collar when he can.—Now, if you have county or borough influence going a begging, send in your nominee, any fellow who'll suit your views, and express your opinions—myself, for instance," said he, laughing, "for want of a better.—Those manes don't lie right; that near-sider's falls on the wrong side of the neck.—The great secret for any man, situated as you are, is to avoid all complications, political, social, and matrimonial. You have a glorious open country before you, if there be no cross-riding to spoil your run."

"Well, I am not above taking advice," said Cashel, "but really I must own that, from the little I've seen of the matter, it seems harder to go through life with a good fortune than without a shilling. I know that, as a poor man, very lately——"

"Come, come, you know very little of what poverty means; you've been leading a gay life in a land where men do, by one bold enterprise, the work which costs years of slow toil in our tamer regions. Now, I should have liked that kind of thing myself. Ay, you may smile, that a man who devotes a large share of each day to the tie of his cravat, and the immaculate elegance of his boots, should venture to talk of Prairie life and adventure. Take care—by Jove! I thought you were into that apple-stall."

"Never say it twice," cried Cashel, gaily. "I'm beginning to feel confoundedly tired of this life here; and, if I don't find that it improves on acquaintance, I'll take a run down west, just to refresh my spirits. Will you come with me?"

"With my whole heart I join the proposal; but you are not serious; I know you are merely jesting in all this."

"Perfectly serious. I am decidedly weary of seven o'clock dinners and morning calls. But here we are."

As he spoke, they drove into the barrack-yard, where groups of lounging officers, in every variety of undress, were seen in all the insipid enjoyment of that cigar-smoking existence, which forms the first article in our military code of education.

The gallant —th Light Dragoons were a "fast regiment," and the inventors of that new locomotive on the road to ruin, called a "mess breakfast"—a meal where champagne flows with a profusion rarely seen at dinner, and by which men begin the day in a frame of mind that would not be very decorous even when concluding it. Cashel, being a honoured guest, drank wine with every one, not to speak of participating in various little bibatory trios and quartets, so that when the entertainment drew to a close, he was very far from that self-possession and command which, with all his high spirits, seldom deserted him.

A tremendous fall of rain, that showed no prospect of ceasing, had just set in, so that the party agreed to repair to the Major's rooms, and make a pool at écarté. After some talking about play in general, and some quizzing about not being able to bet a sum such as Cashel would care to play for, the game began.

Notwithstanding the apologies, the play was high, so much so, that Cashel, never a very shrewd observer, could not help remarking that several of the players could not conceal the anxiety the game inspired.

Roland himself joined less from inclination than fellowship, and far better pleased to be at liberty to chat with some of the others, than to be seated at the table, he arose each time he lost, well content to pay for freedom by his gold. His natural indifference, added to a perfect carelessness about money, induced him to accept any bet that was offered, and these were freely proposed, since, in play *parlance*, "the run was against him;" so that, ere the trumpet-call announced the time to dress for the mess, he had lost heavily.

"You have no idea how much you have lost," said Linton, in a low voice, and with a gravity of manner almost reproachful.

"Not the slightest," said Cashel, laughing.

"I can tell you, then, for I have totted it up. This morning's work has cost you seven thousand some hundred pounds."

"Indeed!" said Cashel, a flush rather of shame than displeasure mantling on his features. "I'll give it up, in future."

"No, no! not till you've had your revenge," whispered Linton. "We'll stay for the mess, and have at them again. The night is terrific, and no possibility of leaving."

The mess followed, and although play was to succeed it, the party drank freely, and sat long over their wine, even Linton himself seeming to linger at the table, and leave it with regret.

As for Cashel, for the first time in his life he wished to play. No desire for money-getting, no mean passion for gain suggested the wish, it was simply a piqued vanity at being beaten; a sense of indignity that his inferiority should seem to be implied, even in so trifling a matter, urged him on, and he was one of the first to vote for a return to écarté.

Except Linton, there was not probably one who could be called a good player in the party—but luck, which has more than the mastery over skill, supplied the place of knowledge, and Cashel was the only heavy loser of the whole assembly. Stung by continued failure, too, he betted madly and foolishly, so that as the day was breaking, and the stir in the barrack-yard announced the approaching parade, his losses reached more than double what they had been in the morning.

"I say, lads!" said the Major, as they all arose from the table, "one word before you go." So saying, he turned the key in the door, and stood with his back against it. "Before any one leaves the room, each must promise on his honour not to mention a syllable of this night's business. We all know that we have been playing far higher stakes than ever we've been in the habit of. The report, if it get abroad, would ruin the regiment."

"Oh, we all promise not a word shall be said about it," cried out several voices together. "There's the second trumpet!" So saying, they hastened pell-mell to dress for the parade, while Cashel, taking Linton's arm, set out homewards.

"I say, Tom!" said Roland, after they had walked on for some time in silence, "I am somewhat ashamed of this exploit of mine, and would not for a great deal that Kennyfeck should know it. Is there no way of getting this money by loan—for if I draw now——"

"Make your mind quite easy; I'll arrange that for you. Don't worry yourself about it. It's a bore, of course, to lose a round sum like that; but you can afford it, my boy, that's one comfort. If it had been me, by Jove, the half of it would have drained the well!" This said, he hastily changed the topic, and they walked along chatting of everything save the late party.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### WHAT ROLAND OVERHEARD AT THE MONEY LENDER'S.

> The money that "at play" is spent,
> Must oft be raised at "cent. per cent."
>
> THE MODE.

"Good night, or rather good morrow," said Linton, as he stood with Cashel on the steps of his newly-taken residence.

Cashel made no reply; his thoughts were recurring to the scene of the late debauch, and in some pangs of self-reproach he was recalling the heavy sum he had lost. "You spoke of my being able to raise this money, Linton, without Kennyfeck's knowing; for I am really ashamed of the affair. Tell me how can it be done?"

"Nothing easier."

"Nay, but when? for if I must confess it, I can think of nothing else till it be arranged."

"What a timid conscience yours must be," said Linton, laughing, "that cannot sleep lest the ghosts of his I. O.'s should haunt him."

"The fact is so, nevertheless. The very gloomy moments of my life have been associated with play transactions. This shall be the last."

"What folly! You suffer mere passing impressions to wear deep into your nature; you that should be a man of nerve and vigour. What can it possibly signify that you have thrown away a few hundreds, or a few thousands either?"

"Very little as regards the money, I own; but I'm not certain how long my indifference respecting play might last. I am not sure how long I could endure being beaten—for that is the sense losing suggests—without a desire to conquer in turn. Now up to this I have played to oblige others, without interest or excitement of any kind. What if I should change and become a gambler from choice?"

"Why, if you propound the question with that solemn air, you'll almost frighten me into believing it would be something very terrible; but if you ask me simply what would be the result of your growing fond of play, I'll tell you fairly, it's a pleasure gained, one of the few resources which only a rich man can afford with impunity, so much the more fascinating, that it can be indulged in such perfect accordance with every humour of a man's mind. If you are so inclined, you play low, and coquet with fortune, or if lavishly given, you throw the reins loose and go free. Now it seems to me that nothing could better suit the careless, open-handed freedom of your habits than the vacillations of high play. It's the only way that even for a moment you can taste the sensation of being hard pressed, while in the high flood of luck you can feel that gushing sense of power that somehow seems to be the secret soul of gold!"

"Men must lose with a very different look upon their features before I can win with the ecstasy you speak of," cried Cashel. "But where are we straying to—what part of the town have we got into?"

"This is the cattle-market," said Linton, "and I have brought you here because I saw you'd not close your eyes till that silly affair was settled, and here we are now at Dan Hoare's counting-house, the man of all others to aid us. Follow me; I ought to know the stairs well, in daylight or dark."

Cautiously following his guide, Cashel mounted a half-rotten, creaky stair, which passed up between two damp and mildewed walls, and entered a small chamber whose one window looked out in a dirty court. The only furniture consisted of two deal chairs and a table, on which various inscriptions made by penknives betokened the patience and zeal of former visitors.

Linton passed on to the end of the chamber, where was a narrow door, but suddenly halted as his eye caught a little slip of paper attached to a sliding panel, and which bore the word "Engaged." "Ha!" cried he, "one here already! You see, early as it is, Dan is at work, discounting

and protesting as usual. By the way, I have forgot one essential: he never gives a stamp, and so I must provide one. Wait for me here; there is a place in the neighbourhood where they can be had, and I'll be back presently."

Cashel sat himself down in the cheerless little den, thinking of the many who might have waited there before, in so many frames of anxiety and torturing suspense. His own memory could recal a somewhat similar character in Geizheimer, and while he was thus remembering some features of the past, he fell into a reverie, forgetting time and place together, the sound of voices from the adjoining room serving rather to lull than arouse his attention. At last a word caught his ear. He started suddenly, and looking about him for a second, experienced almost a difficulty to remember where he was. Could it be possible, or was it mere fancy? but he believed he heard his name mentioned by some one within that room. Less caring to know how or by whom the name was spoken than if the fact were actually so, he leaned forward on his chair, and bent his ear to listen, when he heard, in a voice louder than had been used before, the following words:

"It may be all as you say, Sir; I won't pretend to throw a doubt upon your words; but, as a mere man of business, I may be permitted to say that this promise, however satisfactory to your friend's feelings, is not worth a sixpence in law. Corrigan asks for a renewal of his lease, and the other says, 'Keep your holding—don't disturb yourself,' and there he is, a tenant at will. Now, for the purposes you have in view towards me, that pledge goes for nothing. I cannot renew these bills upon such frail security. If the old man cannot find means to meet them, Leicester must, that's all."

"Leicester is a villain!" cried another and a deeper voice, whose tones seemed not quite strange to Roland's ears. "He has ruined my poor old friend; he will soon leave him houseless, and he threatens to leave him almost friendless too."

"He told me," said the other, "he should certainly claim his daughter, and means to return next summer for that purpose."

"I almost hope poor Con will never live to see that day," said the former, with a heavy sigh.

"Well, to return to our own affair, Sir, I tell you, frankly, I don't consider Cashel's promise deserving of any consideration. He, doubtless, means to keep it; that's the very most anybody can say about it. But remember what a life he is leading: he has drawn above thirty thousand out of Latrobe's hands in three months—no one knows for what. He has got among a set of men who play high, and cannot pay if they lose. Now, his

estate is a good one; but it can't last for ever. My notion is that the young fellow will end as he began, and become a buccaneer once more."

"He has a long course to run ere that comes," said the other.

"Not so long as you fancy. There are demands upon him from quarters you little suspect, or that, for the moment, he little suspects himself. It would surprise you to hear that he is in Leicester's hands too."

"Roland Cashel—Mr. Cashel, in Leicester's hands! How do you mean?"

Just at this instant Linton's foot was heard ascending the stairs, and Cashel, whose eagerness to hear the remainder became a perfect torture of anxiety, was forced to lose the opportunity.

"What a hunt I have had," said Linton, as he entered, flushed and weary-looking. "Our amount is rather above the ordinary mark, and I found it almost impossible to procure the stamps. Are you tired waiting?"

"No—nothing to speak of," said Cashel, confusedly.

"Well, I fancy our friend here has had much more than his share of an audience. I'll see and unearth him."

And so saying, Linton knocked with his cane at the door. A low murmuring of voices succeeded, the sound of feet followed, and soon after the door was opened, and a small, thin, pale-faced man in black appeared.

"Good morning, Mr. Hoare. Here have we been playing ante-chamber to your serene highness for full an hour. This is Mr. Roland Cashel, Mr. Hoare, who wishes to make your acquaintance."

The little man turned his quick grey eyes towards Cashel with a most scrutinising keenness; but, as suddenly withdrawing them, invited both to enter.

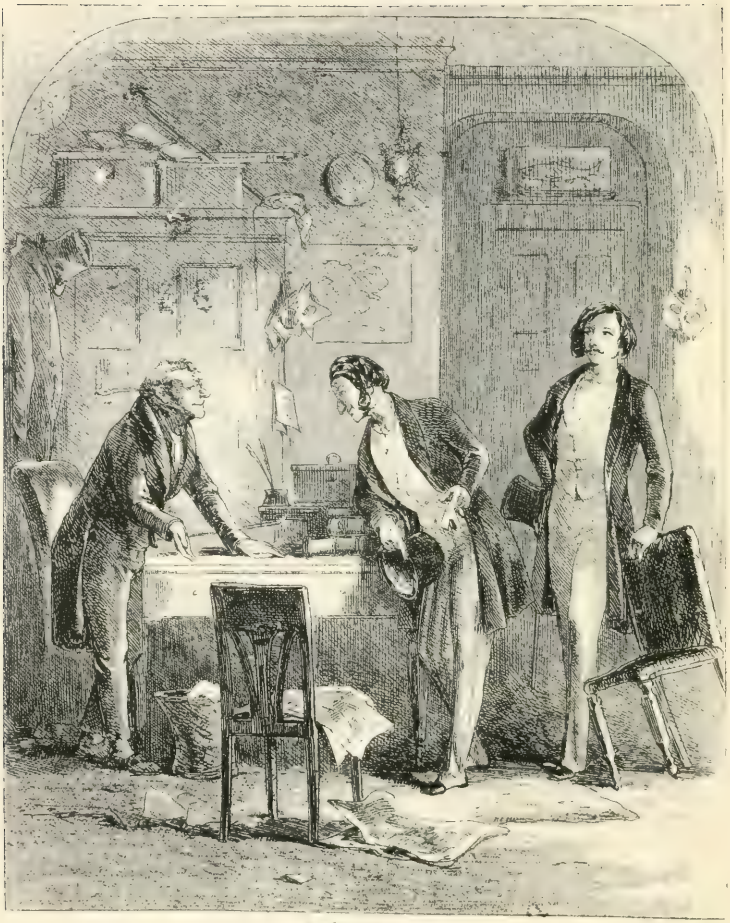
"Be seated, gentlemen. Pardon the humble accommodation of this place. Take a chair, Mr. Linton."

"We want tin, Mr. Hoare," said Linton, slapping his boot with his cane: "that most universal and vulgar want. My friend here desires to raise a sum, without having recourse to his agent, and I believe no man can aid in a little secret-service transaction like yourself."

"Is the sum a large one, Sir?" said Hoare, addressing Cashel.

"I cannot tell you exactly," said Cashel, in some confusion at the confession of his ignorance. "I fancy it must be close on ten or twelve thousand pounds."

"More like twenty!" cried Linton, coolly. Then turning to Hoare, he went on: "My friend here is, happily for him, very little skilled in affairs of this kind; and as his security is about the best that can be offered, he need not buy his experience very dearly. Now just tell us, frankly, how, when, and on what terms he can have this money."



The Money Lender

"Money is scarce just now, Sir," said Hoare; "but as to securities, Mr. Cashel's bills are quite sufficient. There is no necessity for any legal expenses whatever. I need not say that the transaction shall be perfectly secret; in fact, I'll keep the bills in my own hands till due."

"There, that's the man I told you he was," cried Linton. "A Crœsus in generosity as in gold. I would I were your son, or your son-in-law, Hoare."

"Too much honour, Mr. Linton," said the money-lender, whose slight flush did not betoken a concurrence in his own words. "Now to business," continued he, addressing Cashel. "If you favour me with your name on four bills for five thousand each, and the accompanying charges for interest, discount, commission, and so on, I'll engage that you have this money within the week."

"Could it not be to-morrow? I should like greatly to have the whole off my mind; and as I mean not to play again——"

"Pooh, pooh," said Linton, stopping an explanation he was by no means pleased Hoare should hear; "time enough for resolutions, and time enough for payment too. By the end of the week, Hoare, will do perfectly. You can bring the bills with you to my quarters, say on Saturday morning, and we'll drive over to Mr. Cashel's."

"Very well. I'll be punctual. At eleven on Saturday expect me. May I bring that little thing of yours for 200*l.* with it, Mr. Linton?"

"Of course you may not. Where do you expect me to find money for the debts of last year? My dear Hoare, I have no more memory for such things than I have for the sorrows of childhood."

"Ah, very well, Sir, we'll keep it over," said Hoare, smiling.

"Let him bring it," whispered Cashel, "and include it in one of my bills. There's nothing so worrying as an overhanging debt."

"Do you think so?" replied Linton. "Bless me, I never felt that. A life without duns is like a sky without a cloud, very agreeable for a time, but soon becoming wearisome from very monotony. You grow as sick of uninterrupted blue as ever you did of impending rain and storm. Let me have the landscape effect of light and shadow over existence. The brilliant bits are then ten times as glorious in colour, and the dark shadows of one's mortgages only heighten the warmth of the picture. Ask Hoare there, *he*'ll tell you. I actually cherish my debts."

"Very true, Sir; you cannot bear to part with them either."

"Well said, old Moses; the 'interest' they inspire is too strong for one's feelings. But hark! I hear some fresh arrivals without. Another boat load of the d——d has crossed the Styx."

"Thanks for the simile, Sir," said Hoare, smiling faintly—"on Saturday."

"On Saturday," repeated Linton.

Cashel lingered as he left the room; a longing desire to speak one word, to ask one question of Hoare—who was this Leicester of whom he spoke?—was uppermost in his mind, and yet he did not dare to own he had heard the words. He could have wished, too, to communicate his thoughts to Linton, but a secret fear told him that perhaps the mystery might be one he would not wish revealed.

"Why so thoughtful, Roland?" said Linton, after traversing some streets in silence. "My friend Hoare has not terrified you?"

"No, I was not thinking of him," said Cashel. "What kind of character does he bear?"

"Pretty much that of all his class. Sharp enough, when sharpness is called for, and seemingly liberal if liberality pays better. To me he has been ever generous. Why, Heaven knows; I suppose the secret will out one of these days. I'm sure I don't ask for it."

Linton's flippancy, for the first time, was distasteful to Cashel. If the school in which he was bred taught little remorse about the sin of incurring debt, it inculcated, however, a manly self-reliance, to clear off the incumbrance by some personal effort, and he by no means sympathised with the cool indifference of Linton's philosophy. Linton, always shrewd enough to know when he had not "make a hit," at once turned the conversation into another channel, by asking at what time Cashel proposed to receive his visitors at Tubbermore.

"Is the honour seriously intended me?" said Cashel, "or is it merely a piece of fashionable quizzing this promised visit, for I own I scarcely supposed so many fine people would like to encounter the hard usage of such an old ruin as I hear this must be."

"You'll have them to a certainty. I doubt if there will be a single apology. I know at this instant the most urgent solicitations have been employed to procure invitations."

"With all my heart, then," cried Cashel; "only remember the order of the course depends on you. I know nothing of how they ought to be entertained or amused. Take the whole affair into your own hands, and I shall concur in everything."

"Originality is always better than imitation, but still if one cannot strike out a totally new line, what do you think of taking old Mathews of Johnstown for our model, and invite all our guests with free permission to dine, breakfast, and sup at what hour, and in what parties they please? This combines the unbridled freedom of an inn with the hospitality of a country-house. Groups form as fancy dictates. New combinations spring up each day—no fatigue, no *ennui* can ensue with such endless changes in com-

panionship, and you yourself, instead of the fatiguing duties of a host, are at liberty, like any of your guests, to join this party or that."

"I like the notion immensely—how would our friends take it, for that is the point?"

"It would be popular with every one, for it will suit you people who know and like to mix with every set in society, and at the same time gratify your 'exclusives,' who can form their own little coteries with all the jealous selection they love. Besides, it avoids another and a great difficulty. Had you received in ordinary fashion, you must have asked some lady-friend to have done the honours for you. This would have been a matter of the greatest embarrassment. The Kennyfecks have not rank enough—old Lady Janet would have frightened every one away—Mrs. White would have filled the house with her own 'blues,' and banished every one else—and as for Lady Kilgoff—who besides being a very pretty woman and well-mannered, has an exceedingly fascinating way with strangers—'My Lord' is so jealous, so absurdly, madly jealous, that she dare not ask after the success of a shooting-party without his suspecting an allegorical allusion to Cupid and his shafts."

"Well, then, let us resolve to receive 'en Mathews;' and now, when shall we name the day?"

"Let us wait till the result of the division be known in Parliament. A change of Ministers is hinted at, and if it were to occur, you'll have every one hastening away to his county for the new election; by Saturday we shall learn everything, and that will be time enough."

"In any case, I had better set off and see what can be done to put the house in a fit state to receive them."

"Leave all that to me. I'll take Popham, the architect, down with me, and you need never trouble your head about the matter. It's quite clear people who accept an invitation like the present, must put up with a hundred small penalties on convenience. The liberty of such a house always repays whatever is wanting on the score of ceremonial and order, and your fine guests, who would perhaps give themselves airs towards the Kennyfecks and their set—if meeting them elsewhere—will here affect, at least, a tone of good-natured equality, just as in revolutionary times people shake hands with their hairdresser."

"But how to amuse or even occupy them! that is a great puzzle to me."

"Leave them perfectly to their own devices. In fun there should be always free-trade. Protection ruins it. But all this is Egyptian to you, so go to bed and sleep soundly, and leave the cares of state to me.

> On me the glory or disgrace,
> The pride of triumph or the shame of fall."

"Then I'll think no more of the matter," said Cashel; "and so good-by."

"Now for a twenty-four hours' sleep," said Linton, "and then, once more, to roll the stone of life, which, by the way, gives the lie to the old adage, for unquestionably it does 'gather moss' as we grow older."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SCANNING THE POLITICAL HORIZON.

Confound their politics!—NATIONAL ANTHEM.

LINTON was very far from indulging that dreamy inactivity of which he spoke. Plans and schemes of various kinds occupied his thoughts too intently to admit of slumber. Indeed, his theory was, that if a man could not dream of some happy mode of advancing his fortune, sleep was a fearful inroad upon his worldly career.

He at once hastened home to read his letters and newspapers, and so important did their intelligence seem, that he only delayed to change his dress and eat a hurried breakfast, when he repaired to the Castle, where a few minutes previously the Secretary, Mr. Downie Meek, had arrived from his lodge in the Park.

"Safe once more, Meek," said he, entering the official chamber, where, immersed in printed returns, petitions, and remonstrances, sat the busy Secretary.

"Ah, Linton! you are the *bien venu*. We are to have another heat for the race, though I own it scarcely looks promising."

"Particularly as you are going to carry weight," said Linton, laughing. "It's true, I suppose, that the Irish party have joined you?"

"There was no help for it," said the Secretary, with a despondent gesture of the eyebrows; "we had no alternative save accepting the greasy voices, or go out. Some deemed the former the better course, but others remembered the story of the Brahmin, who engaged to teach the ass to speak in ten years, or else forfeit his own head."

"And perfectly right," interrupted Linton. "The Brahmin had only three chances in his favour. Now, your King may die too, and you have any number of asses to be got rid of."

"Let us be serious, Tom. What are our prospects at a general election? Are the landed gentry growing afraid of the O'Gorman party, or are they still hanging back, resentful of Peel's desertion?"

"They are very conservative—that is, they want to keep their properties, and pay the least possible taxation. Be cautious, however, and you have them all your own. The Irish party being now with you, begin by some marked favour to the Protestant Church. Hear me out. This will alarm the Romanists, and cause a kind of split amongst them. Such as have, or expect to have place, will stand by you; the others will show fight. You have then an opportunity of proclaiming yourselves a strong Protestant Cabinet, and the ultras, who hate Peel, will at least affect to believe you While the country is thus agitated, go to the elections. Your friends amid so many unsettled opinions, cannot be expected to take pledges, or, better still, they cannot accept any, subject to various contingencies never to arise."

"I am sorely afraid of this splitting up the forces," said Meek, doubtfully.

"It's your true game, depend upon it," said Linton. "These Irish allies are unwieldy—when numerous. I remember once calling on Tom Scott, the trainer, one day, and while we went through the stables, I could not help remarking the fine family of boys he had. 'Yes, Sir,' said Tom, modestly, 'they're good-looking chaps, and smart ones. God Almighty keep 'em little, Sir!'"

"Ah, very true," sighed Meek; "God Almighty keep 'em little!"

"Then," resumed Linton, "you have never played out that golden game of Irish legislation, which consists in enacting a law, and always ruling against it. Decide for the Education System, but promote the men who oppose it. Condemn the public conduct of certain parties, and then let them figure as Baronets, or Lieutenants of Counties, in the next *Gazette*, and to crown all, seek out every now and then some red-hot supporter of Government, and degrade him from the bench of magistrates for maladministration! This, which in England would seem rather chaotic legislation, will, to Irish intelligence, smack like even-handed justice."

"We have a bad press," said Meek, peevishly.

"No matter, it has the less influence. Believe me, it will be an evil day for you Downing-street gentlemen when Ireland possesses a really able and independent press—when, avoiding topics of mere irritating tendency, men address themselves to the actual wants of the country, exemplifying, as they disclose them, the inaptitude and folly of English legislation. Don't wait for that day, Meek. In all likelihood it is distant enough, but in any case don't hasten its coming by your prayers."

"You mustn't broach these doctrines out of doors, Tom," said Meek, in a soft, caressing tone; "there is a horrid cant getting up just now against English rule, and in favour of native manufactures."

"Which be they, Meek? I never heard of them. Maynooth is the only factory I know of in the land, and a brisk trade it has, home and colonial."

"You know as well as any man the benefits we have conferred on this country."

"Yes, it demands no great tax on memory to repeat them. You found a starving peasantry of a couple of millions, and being unable or incompetent to aid them, you ruined the gentry to keep them company. You saw a mangy miserable dog with famine in his flank and death in his eye, and answering his appeal to your compassion, you cut an inch off his tail and told him to eat it."

"You are too bad, Tom—a great deal too bad. What are you looking for?"

"Nothing at present," was the cool reply.

"What in prospective, then?"

"I should like to be the Secretary for Ireland, Meek, whenever they shelve you among the other unredeemed pledges in that pawn-office, the Board of Trade."

Meek affected a laugh, but not over successfully, while to turn the conversation, he said, "*A propos* to your friend Cashel, I have not been able to show him any attentions, so occupied have I been with one thing and another. Let us make a dinner for him."

"No, no, he doesn't care for such things. Come and join his housewarming on the Shannon, that will be far better."

"I mean it, but I should like, also, to see him here. He knows the Kilgoffs, doesn't he?"

"Slightly. By the way, what are you going to do with my Lord? He wants, like Sancho, to be Governor of an island."

"What an old bore! without brains, fortune, or influence."

"He has a very pretty wife, Meek. Don't you think the Foreign Office would recognise *that* claim?"

"So they send him out of this, I am content. But to return to what we were talking about. Shall we say Friday? or will Saturday suit you? and we'll make up a small party."

"I fear not. I mean to leave town by the end of the week."

"Not for any time?"

"A few days only, and then I shall be at your orders—meanwhile, leave Cashel to himself; he has got some suspicions—Heaven knows whence or how—that his borough influence makes him a very important card just now; therefore don't notice him—starve him out, and you'll have him come forth with a white flag one of these days. I know him well, and the chances are, that if he were to attribute any of your civilities to the score of your calcu-

lation respecting his political influence, he would at once become your most determined opponent."

"But his borough——"

"Let him represent it himself, Meek, and it's the next best thing to disfranchisement."

"He would not be likely to accept any advice from us?" asked Meek, half timidly.

"To a certainty he would not, although proffered in your own most insinuating manner. Come, Meek, no nonsense; you must look out for a seat for your *protégé*, Clare Jones, elsewhere; though I tell you frankly he is not worth the trouble."

"I declare you are all wrong, Linton—quite wrong; I was thinking whether from motives of delicacy you would not like to press your own claim, which *we* might, with so much propriety."

"Thanks," said Linton; while a sly twinkle of his eye showed that he did not care to disguise the spirit of mistrust with which he heard the speech. "Thanks; *you* are too generous, and I am too modest, so let us not think more of the matter."

"What is Cashel's real fortune?" said Meek, not sorry to turn the conversation into a less dangerous channel; "one hears so many absurd and extravagant reports, it is hard to know what to believe."

"Kennyfeck calls it fourteen thousand a year above all charges and cost of collection."

"And your own opinion?"

Linton shrugged his shoulders carelessly, and said, "There or thereabouts. I fancy that his ready money has been greatly overrated. But why do you ask? Your people wouldn't give him a peerage, would they?"

"Not now, of course," said Meek, hesitating.

"Nor at any time, I trust," said Linton, authoritatively. "The man does not know how to behave as a plain country gentleman; why increase his embarrassments by making him a Lord? Besides, you should take care in these new creations who are your peeresses, or one of these days you'll have old Kennyfeck fancying that he is a noble himself."

"There is no danger to be apprehended in that quarter?" asked Meek, with some trepidation of manner.

"Yes, but there is, though, and very considerable, too. He has been living in the house with those girls—clever and shrewd girls, too. He is more at his ease there than elsewhere. They listen patiently to his tiresome Prairie stories, and are indulgent to all his little 'escapades'—as a 'Ranchero;' in a word, he is a hero there, and never leaves the threshold without losing some of the charms of the illusion."

"And you saw all this?"

"Yes."

"And suffered it?"

"Yes. What would you have me do? Had there been only one girl in the case—I might have married her. But it is only in Botany, or the Bay of that name, that the English permit polygamy."

"I am very sorry to hear this," said Meek, gravely.

"I am very sorry to have it to tell, Meek," said the other.

"He might marry so well!" muttered Meek, half in soliloquy.

"To be sure he might; and in good hands—I mean in those of a man who sees his way in life—cut a very fair figure, too. But it won't do to appear in London with a second or third-rate woman, whose only recommendation is the prettiness that has fascinated 'Castle Balls' in Dublin."

"Let us talk over this again, Linton," said Meek, arranging his papers, and affecting to be busied.

"With all my heart; indeed, it was a subject I intended to speak to you about. I have a little theory thereanent myself."

"Have you, indeed?" said Meek, looking up with animation.

"Yes, but it needs your counsel—perhaps something more, I should say—but another time—good-by, good-by." And without waiting to say or hear more, Linton lounged out of the room, leaving the Secretary, thoughtful and serious, behind him.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### "UNDER THE GREEN-WOOD TREE."

Nor lives the heart so cold and dark
But in its depths some lingering spark
Of love is cherished there!

THE OUTLAW.

WHEN Tom Linton parted with Mr. Meek he repaired to the club in Kildare-street to listen to the gossip on the rumoured dissolution of Parliament, and pick up what he could of the prevailing tone among the country gentry.

His appearance was eagerly hailed by many, who regarded him as generally well informed on all the changes and turns of party warfare; but, as he professed the most complete ignorance of everything, and seemed to devour with greedy curiosity the most common-place announcements, he was speedily

deserted and suffered to pursue his work of inquiry perfectly unmolested. Not that indeed there was much to learn; the vein of banter and raillery with which, from want of all real political influence, men in Ireland accustom themselves to discuss grave questions, concealing their real sentiments, or investing them with a ludicrous exaggeration, oftentimes foiled even the shrewd perception of Tom Linton.

He did, however, learn so much as showed him that all the ordinary landmarks of party being lost, men were beginning to feel themselves at liberty to adopt any leadership which pleased them, without suffering the stain of desertion. They thought themselves betrayed by each of the great political chiefs in turn, and began to fancy that the best course for them in future would be to make specific terms for any support they should accord. Suggestions to this end thrown out in all the bantering gaiety of Irish manner might mean anything, or nothing, and so Linton well knew, as he listened to them.

He had taken his place at a whist-table, that he might, while seemingly preoccupied, hear what was said around him, and although no error of play, nor a single mistake in the game, marked the different direction of his attention, he contrived to learn much of the opinion prevalent in certain circles.

"That is the luckiest fellow in Europe," said one of his late antagonists; "as usual, he rises the only winner."

"You can scarcely call it luck," said another; "he is a first-rate player, and always so cool."

Meanwhile, Linton, mounting his horse, rode slowly along the streets till he arrived at Bilton's Hotel, where a handsome britschka was standing, whose large up-standing horses and richly-mounted harnessing gave token of London rather than of Dublin taste.

"Is her Ladyship going out, Halpin?" said he to the footman.

"Her Ladyship ordered the carriage for four precisely, Sir."

Linton mused for a second or two, and then asked if Lord Kilgoff were at home? and not waiting for a reply, passed on.

No sooner, however, had he reached the landing-place, and was beyond the observation of the servant, than he halted and appeared to reflect. At last, as if having made his resolve, he turned to descend the stairs, when the drawing-room door opened and Lord Kilgoff appeared.

"The very man I wanted. Linton, come here," cried he, re-entering the room.

"I was just on my way to you, my Lord," said Linton, with well-affected eagerness.

"Are they out, Linton, are they 'out?'" said he, in breathless impatience.

"No, my Lord. I've seen Meek; they're safe for the present. A coalition has been formed with O'Morgan and his party, which secures a working majority of forty-five or fifty."

"This is certain, Linton—may I rely upon it?"

"You may, my Lord, with confidence."

"Then I suppose the moment is come when my adhesion would be most well-timed. It's a grave question, Tom; everything depends on it. If I join them and they go out——"

"Why your Lordship goes out too, without ever having the satisfaction of being 'in.'"

"Not if they gave me the mission to Florence, Tom. They never remove the smaller legations in any change of parties."

"But you could not help resigning, my Lord; you should follow your friends," said Linton, with an assumed air of high principle.

"Not a bit of it; I'd hold on. I see no reason whatever for such a course. I have made a rough draft of a letter, which Hindley should show to Peel. See here, this is the important passage. I presuppose that I had already given Hindley my resignation to hand in to Aberdeen, but that yielding to his arguments, who refuses to deliver it, I have reconsidered the matter. Now, listen:—'You say that my functions are not of a nature to admit any line of partisanship, and that a man of honourable views can serve his country under a Whig or Tory administration, irrespective of his own preference for one or the other. I feel this to be true. I know that, in my own official career, I have always forgotten the peculiar politics of my masters; but another question arises,—how shall I be judged by others; for while I confess to you that I entertain for Peel's capacity a respect I have never been able to feel for the Whig leaders, yet family prejudices, connexions, a hundred minor circumstances, some purely accidental, threw me among the ranks of that party, and a sense of consistency kept me where very probably unbiased judgment had never suffered me to remain.'"

"Amazingly good! very well done, indeed!" said Linton, in whose dubious smile younger eyes than Lord Kilgoff's might have read the most insolent expression of contempt; not, indeed, at the hypocrisy, but at the poor attempt to give it colour. "There could be no thought of removing a man with such sentiments."

"I think not, Linton. It would be a gross and flagrant case of official tyranny to do so,—a case for inquiry in the House,—a motion to produce the correspondence——"

"Better not, my Lord," said Linton, dryly; "that is an admirable lett addressed to your friend Lord Hindley; but in a blue book it won't read so well. Take my advice: hold on if you can, go if you must, but don't ask questions, at all events."

"Perhaps you are right, Tom," said Kilgoff, musing.

"Now for another point, my Lord; this visit to Mr. Cashel——"

"I've declined it," said Lord Kilgoff, reddening, and with a look of extreme irritation. "The note is there sealed on the table, and shall be sent within an hour."

"I am not at liberty to ask your reasons, my Lord," said Linton, gravely and respectfully, "but I am certainly free to state my own, why I think you ought most positively to go there."

"You may, certainly," said Lord Kilgoff, rising impatiently, and pacing the room; "I shall not interrupt you, but I shall also pledge myself not to let them influence me in the slightest degree. My mind is made up, Sir."

"Then I shall speak with more freedom," said Linton, boldly; "because, having no pretension to change your sentiments, I am merely desirous to record my own."

Lord Kilgoff made no reply, but continued his walk, while Linton resumed:

"Now, I see your impatience, my Lord, and will not trespass on it. Here, in three words, is my case. The borough of Drumkeeran returns a member to Parliament; Hebden, who represents it, is about to accept the Hundreds; Cashel owns the town."

"And if he does, Sir, what signifies it to me?" broke in Lord Kilgoff; "I have not the slightest influence over that gentleman's opinions. He was rude enough to give me a very flat contradiction in the only discussion we ever held together. I venture to assert, from what I have seen of him, that any direction of his course in Parliament would be totally impossible. He is self-willed, obstinate, and opinionated."

"Granted, my Lord; he is the very calibre to run through his own, and ruin any other man's fortune."

"Well, Sir, and this is the person whose services you think it worth my while obtaining?"

"I never said so, my Lord."

"What, didn't I hear you this moment——"

"No, you heard me say that the borough is his, but you never heard me say that he ought to be its member. For that honour I had another in my eye, one over whom your Lordship's influence has never yet been doubted."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Tom Linton, my Lord; a very unworthy, but a most devoted, partisan of your Lordship's."

"What! Tom,—*you* in Parliament?"

"Even so, my Lord," said Linton, for once in his life—perhaps, the only time—that a flash of angry meaning coloured his calm features. "I am sorry that the notion should so palpably wake your Lordship's amazement."

"No—no—no! I didn't mean that. I was only surprised. In fact, you took me unawares—we were talking of Cashel."

"Precisely, my Lord; we were discussing the probable career of a person so eminently gifted with statesmanlike qualities; then, how could I possibly hope for patience when introducing to your notice abilities so humble as my own?"

"But is it possible—is this practicable, Linton?"

"With your assistance it is certain. The influence of your Lordship's rank would give such weight to your opinions, that if you were only to say to him, 'Send Linton into Parliament as your member,' the thing is done."

"I have my doubts."

"I have none whatever—I know the man well. He is dying to conform to anything that he supposes to be the discipline of his class. Tell him he ought, and he never resists."

"I had resolved on not paying this visit," said Kilgoff, after a brief pause; "reasons of sufficient weight determined me."

"Oh, my Lord, pardon the freedom, but I must say that they had need be strong reasons to weigh against all the advantages I can show from the opposite course."

"They are, Sir, very strong reasons, nor do I deem it necessary to advert to them again; enough that I esteem them sufficient."

"Of course, my Lord, I never dreamed of calling them in question; they must needs be cogent arguments which counterpoise the opposite scale—a high diplomatic career—a representative Peerage—this there could be no doubt of."

"How do you mean?" broke in Kilgoff, abruptly.

"Simply that this young man becomes your trump card, if you only cease to take him up. As yet he has resisted the advances made by Downie Meek and his set, because of my watchfulness, but sooner or later some party will catch him, and when one thinks how few men with a large unencumbered fortune we possess here, with a great county interest, two boroughs, for he owns Knockgarvan as well, the prize is really worth having, particularly as it only needs the stretching out the hand to take."

Lord Kilgoff mused and seemed to ponder over the words. He entertained small doubts of his "friend" Linton's capacity; but he had very considerable suspicions of his principles, and it is a strange fact that people willing to commit very gross breaches of fair dealing themselves are exceedingly scrupulous respecting the fair fame of their associates in iniquity, so admirably accommodating is a worldly conscience!

"Well, Sir," said he, at length, "the price—name the price. What are we to pay for the article?—that is the question."

"I have said, my Lord, it is to be had for asking. Your Lordship has only to take the territory, as our naval men do the chance islands they meet with in the Southern Pacific. Land and plant you flag—*voilà tout!*"

"But you have heard me observe already," said he, in a querulous tone, "that I dislike the prospect of this visit—that in fact it would be exceedingly disagreeable to me."

"Then I have nothing more to say, my Lord," said Linton, coolly, while he took up his hat and gloves. "I can only congratulate you on the excellence of your political prospects, which can dispense with a strong alliance to be had so easily."

"Our measures of value are very different, Mr. Linton," said Lord Kilgoff, proudly. "Still, to prove that this is no caprice on my part"—here he stopped abruptly, while his heightened colour showed the degree of embarrassment he laboured under—"to show you that I have—in order to explain my motives——" Here he took a cautious glance around the room, walked to the door, opened and shut it again, and then drawing his arm within Linton's, led him towards a window. For a second or two he seemed undecided, and at last, by a great effort, he whispered a few words in Linton's ear.

Had any third party been there to watch the effect of the whispered confidence, he might easily have read in the speaking brilliancy of Linton's eyes and in his assured look, that it was of a nature to give him the greatest pleasure. But scarce had his Lordship done speaking, when these signs of pleasure gave way to a cold, almost stern air of morality, and he said, "But surely, my Lord, it were far better to leave her Ladyship to deal with such insolent pretension——"

"Hush, not so loud; speak lower. So I should, Linton, but women never will see anything in these airs of puppyism. They persist in thinking or saying, at least, that they are mere modern fashionable manners, and this endurance on their part gives encouragement. And then, when there happens to be some disparity of years—Lady Kilgoff *is* my junior—the censorious world seizes on the shadow of a scandal; in fact, Sir, I will not consent to afford matter for newspaper asterisks or figurative description."

"Your Lordship never had a better opportunity of giving open defiance to both. These airs of Cashel are, as you remark, mere puppyism, assumed to get credit for a certain fashionable character for levity. To avoid him would be to acknowledge that there was danger in his society. I don't go so far as to say that he would assert as much, but most assuredly the world would for him. I think I hear the ready comments on your absence: 'Were not the Kilgoffs expected here?' 'Oh, they were invited, but Lord Kilgoff was afraid to venture. Cashel had been paying attentions.' In a word, every species of impertinence that malevolence and envy can fancy would be fabricated. Your Lordship knows the world far better than I do; and knows, besides, the heavy price a man pays for being the possessor of a high capacity and a handsome wife; these are two insults that the less fortunate in life never do, or never can forgive."

"Well, what is it you counsel?"

"To meet these calumnies in the face; small slanders, like weak fires, are to be trampled out; to tamper with such, is to fan the flame, which at last will scorch you. Besides, to take another view of the matter: her Ladyship is young, and has been much admired; how will she accept this seclusion? I don't speak of the present case; besides, I suppose that this country visit would bore her beyond measure. But how will she regard it in other instances? Is it not an implied fear on your Lordship's part? you, who have really nothing to dread in competition with any man. I only know, if I were in your place, how I should actually seize the very opportunity of openly flouting such calumnious rumour; never was there an occasion to do so on cheaper terms. This Roland Cashel is an underbred boy."

"There is a great deal in what you say, Linton. But as jealousy is a feeling of which I have never had any experience, I was only anxious on Lady Kilgoff's account, that the thoughtless gaiety of a very young and handsome woman should not expose her to the sarcastic insinuations of an impertinent world. She *is* gay in manner—there *is* an air of lively imagination——"

"No more than what the French call '*amabilité*,' my Lord, which, like the famed armour of Milan, is not the less defensive that it is so beautiful in all its details."

"Well, then, I'll not send the note," said Lord Kilgoff, as he took up the letter, and tearing it, threw the fragments into the fire; "of course, Linton, this conversation is strictly confidential?"

"Your Lordship has never found me unworthy of such a trust."

"Never; nor, I must say, would it be for your advantage to become so." Linton bit his lip, and for a second or two seemed burning to make a re-

joinder, but overcoming the temptation, assumed his careless smile, and said,

"I leave you, my Lord, greatly gratified that chance led me to pay this visit. I sincerely believe, that in the counsels I have offered, I have at least been able to be of service to you."

Lord Kilgoff presented his hand in acknowledgment of the speech, but it was accorded with an air which seemed to say, "Well, here is a receipt in full for your devotedness."

Linton took it in the same spirit, and left the room, as though deeply impressed with all the honour he enjoyed in such a noble friendship.

Hastening down the stairs, he sprang into the saddle of his horse, and cantering up the street, turned towards the road which leads to the Phœnix Park. It was about the hour when the equipages were wont to throng that promenade, but Linton did not seem desirous of joining that gay crowd, for he took a cross-path through the fields, and after a sharp ride of half an hour, reached a low paling which skirted the Park on the eastward; here, at a small cottage kept by one of the rangers, a little door led in, passing through which he found himself in one of the long green alleys of that beautiful tract. A boy, who seemed to be ready waiting, now took his horse, and Linton entered the wood and disappeared. He did not proceed far, however, within the shady copse, for after going a short distance he perceived a carriage standing in the lane, by the door of which a footman waited, with a shawl upon his arm. The coachman, with his whip poised, sat talking with his fellow-servant, so that Linton saw that the carriage had no occupant.

He now hastened along, and speedily emerging at a little grassy opening of the wood, came in sight of a lady walking at some distance in front. The fashionable air and splendid dress, which might have suited the most brilliant promenade of a great city, seemed strange in such a lone, unvisited spot. Linton lost no time in overtaking her, only diminishing his speed as he came closer, when, with his hat removed, and in an attitude of the most humble deference, he said,

"Pray let me stand excused if I am somewhat behind my time; the fault was not my own."

"Oh, say nothing about it," said a soft, musical voice, and Lady Kilgoff turned an easy smile towards him. "'Qui s'excuse, s'accuse,' says the French proverb, and *I* never dreamt of the accusation. Is it not a lovely day here?"

Linton was too much piqued to answer at once, but recovering, he said: "Without seeking to apologise for an absence that was not felt, let me return to the subject. I assure your Ladyship that I had been detained by

Lord Kilgoff, who was pleased to bestow a more than ordinary share of his confidence upon me, and even condescended to ask my counsel."

"How flattering! Which you gave, I hope, with all the sincerity for which you are famous."

Linton tried to smile, but not very successfully.

"What then was this wonderful mystery? Not the representative Peerage, I trust; I'm sure I hope that question is at rest for ever."

"You are quite safe there—he never mentioned it."

"Oh, then it was his Diplomatic ambition—ain't I right? Ah, I knew it. How very silly, or how very wicked you must be, Mr. Linton, to encourage these day-dreams—you who have not the excuse of hallucinations, who read the book of life as it is written, without fanciful interpretations."

"I certainly must disclaim your panegyric. I had one hallucination, if so you term it; it was that you wished, ardently wished, for the position which a foreign 'mission' bestows. A very natural wish, I freely own, in one so worthy in every way to grace and adorn it."

"Well, so I did some time back, but I've changed my mind. I don't think I should like it—I have been reconsidering the subject."

"And your Ladyship inclines now rather to seclusion and rural pleasures—how fortunate that I should have been able to serve your interests there also."

"What do you mean?" said she, with a stare, while a deep scarlet suffused her cheek.

"I alluded to a country visit which you fancied might be made so agreeably, but which his Lordship had the bad taste to regard less favourably."

"Well, Sir, you did not presume to give any opinion?"

"I really did. I had all the hardihood to brave Lord Kilgoff's most fixed resolves. You were aware that he declined Mr. Cashel's invitation?"

She nodded, and he went on.

"Probably, too, knowing the reasons for that refusal?"

"No, Sir; the matter was indifferent to me, so I never troubled my head about it. My Lord said we shouldn't go, and I said, 'Very well,' and there it ended."

Now, although this was spoken with a most admirably feigned indifference, Linton was too shrewd an observer not to penetrate the deception.

"I am doubly unlucky this day," said he, at last, "first to employ all my artifices to plan a ministerial success to which you are actually averse, and secondly, to carry a point to which you are indifferent."

"Dare I ask, if the question be not an indiscreet one, what peculiar

interest Mr. Linton can have, either in our acceptance or refusal of this invitation?"

"Have I not said that I believed you desired it?" replied he, with a most meaning look.

"Indeed you read inclinations most skilfully, only that you interpret them by anticipation."

"This is too much," said Linton, in a voice whose passionate earnestness showed that all dissimulation was at an end, "far too much! The genteel comedy that we play before the world, Madam, might be laid aside for a few moments here. When I asked for this interview, and you consented to give it——"

"It was on the express stipulation that you should treat me as you do in society, Sir," broke she in—"that there should be no attempt to fall back upon an intimacy which can never be resumed."

"When I promised, I intended to have kept my word, Laura," said he, in deep dejection; "I believed I could have stifled the passion that consumes me, and talked to you in the words of sincere, devoted friendship, but I cannot. Old memories of once happiness, brought up too vividly by seeing you, as I used to see you, when in many a country walk we sauntered on, dreaming of the time when, mine, by every tie of right, as by affection——"

"How you requited that affection, Linton!" said she, in a tone whose deep reproach seemed actually to stun him. Then suddenly changing to an air of disdainful anger, she continued: "You are a bold man, Linton. I thought it would be too much for even *your* hardihood to recur to a theme so full of humiliation for yourself; but I know your theory, Sir: you think there is a kind of heroism in exaggerated baseness, and that it is no less great to transcend men in crime than in virtue. You dare to speak of an affection that you betrayed and bartered for money!"

"I made you a Peeress, Madam. When you were Laura Gardiner, you couldn't have spoken to me as now you speak."

"If I consented to the vile contract, it was that, when I discovered your baseness, any refuge was preferable to being the wife of one like you!"

"A most complimentary assurance, not only to myself, but his Lordship," said Linton, with an insolent smile.

"Now, hear me," said she, not noticing the taunt, but speaking with a voice of deep collected earnestness. "It is in vain to build upon time or perseverance—the allies you trust so deeply—to renew the ties broken for ever. If I had no other higher and more sustaining motive, my knowledge of you would be enough to rescue me from this danger. I know you well,

Linton. You have often told me what an enemy you could be. This, at least, I believe of all that you have ever sworn! I have a full faith, too, in your ingenuity and skill: and yet I would rather brave both—ay, both hate and craft—than trust to what you call your honour."

"You do indeed know me well, Laura," said he, in a voice broken and faltering, "or you never had dared to speak such words to me. There is not one breathing could have uttered them and not pay the penalty, save yourself. I feel in my inmost heart how deeply I have wronged you, but is not my whole life an atonement for the wrong? Am I not heartbroken and wretched, without a hope or a future? What greater punishment did any one ever incur than to live in the daily sight and contemplation of a bliss that his own folly or madness have for ever denied him; and yet, to that same suffering do I cling, as the last tie that binds me to existence. To see you in the world, to watch you, to mark the effect your grace and beauty are making on all around you—how every fascination calls up its tribute of admiration—how with each day some new excellence develops itself, till you seem inexhaustible in all the traits of graceful womanhood, this has been the cherished happiness of my life! It was to this end I laboured to induce the acceptance of that invitation that once more, beneath the same roof, I should see you for days long. Your own heart must confess how I have never before the world forgotten the distance that separates us. There is then no fear that I should resign every joy that yet remains to me for any momentary indulgence of speaking to you as my heart feels. No, no, Laura, you have nothing to dread either from my hate or my love."

"To what end, then, was it that you asked me to meet you here to-day?" said she, in a voice in which a touch of compassionate sorrow was blended.

"Simply to entreat, that if I should succeed in persuading his Lordship to accept this visit, you would throw no obstacle in the way on your side."

"And if I consent, shall I have no cause to rue my compliance?"

"So far as depends on me, none, on my honour!"

It had been better for Linton's cause that he had omitted the last words at least, as Laura turned away her head, a curl of insolent meaning was on her lip, but she did not speak, and they now walked along, side by side, in silence.

"You will go then?" said he, at last, in a low whisper.

"Yes," said she, faintly.

Linton stole a glance at her unperceived, and suddenly the sparkle of his

eyes and the elation of his whole expression showed the transport of pleasure he experienced.

"Now for one word of caution," said Linton, as drawing closer to her side he assumed the tone of sincere friendship. "Lord Kilgoff has just revealed to me, in deep confidence, that he has been much offended by certain attentions shown to you by this Mr. Cashel, and which were of so marked a nature that he was almost determined never to admit his intimacy in future. Had his Lordship known you as well as I do, he might have spared himself this anxiety. I believe such savage excellence as his has few attractions for you, nor, save the admiration that all must yield you, has the youth taste or feeling to appreciate your excellence. However, 'my Lord' is jealous; let it be your care, by knowledge of the fact, not to incur anything to sustain the suspicion."

"How very absurd all this is. Do you know that Mr. Cashel did not condescend to pay me the poor compliment of a special invitation to his house, but asked my Lord to come, and hoped I would accompany him; just as people invite their humbler acquaintances, hoping that only half the request may be accorded."

"He is underbred even to barbarism," said Linton.

"He seems a most good-natured creature, and full of generosity."

"Overwealth has sometimes that air. When the glass is brimful, none but the steadiest hand can carry, without spilling, the wine."

"He does not appear even to make the effort. They tell me he has squandered some thousands already, making presents to every one who will accept them."

"He gave me this cane," said Linton, superciliously, exhibiting a little riding-cane, which he had taken himself out of Cashel's hand, and was of no value whatever. "Not any great evidence of exaggerated generosity," said he. "As to his house, however, I trust its honours may be well done; he has given me *carte blanche*, and I must only try and not disgrace my prerogative."

"How very late it is—nearly seven," said Lady Kilgoff, looking at her watch.

"Shall I see your Ladyship to your carriage?" said Linton.

"I think not," said she, blushing slightly; "as I left it unaccompanied, so I shall return to it. Good-by."

She held out her hand as she spoke, but slightly averted her head, so that Linton could not mark the expression of her features. As it was, he pressed the gloved fingers to his lips, but, when doing so, contrived to unclasp her bracelet, a singularly rich one, and a present from Lord Kilgoff on the day

of her marriage. This he let fall noiselessly on the grass, and murmured, in a low, sad voice, "Good-by."

Lady Kilgoff, hastily wrapping her shawl about her, left the spot. Linton watched her till he had seen her seated in the carriage, and continued to gaze after it, as it drove rapidly away, and so intently occupied by his thoughts, that he did not notice the approach of a horseman, who came up at a walking pace behind him.

"Eh, Tom!" cried out Lord Charles Frobisher, "this is flying at high game!"

"You are mistaken, Charley," said he, in some confusion. "This 'meeting under the greenwood-tree' was nothing less than a love affair."

"Oh, hang your morality, Mr. Joseph; it's rather good fun to see the 'insolent beauty' of the season capitulating."

"Wrong again," said Linton, affecting a laugh. "Everton is in a scrape, and his wife wants me to get him out of the way——"

"Nonsense, man, I saw the carriage; there is no need of mystifying here. Besides, it's no affair of mine—I'm sure I wish it were! But come, what are the odds on Hitchley's colt—are seven to two taken?"

"Don't bet," said Linton, knowingly; "there is something 'wrong' in that stable, and I hav'n't found out the secret."

"What a deep fellow you are, Tom."

"Nothing of the kind, Charley. If I were, you'd never have discovered it. Your only deep fellow is he that the world deems shallow—your light-hearted, rattling knave, whose imputed thoughtlessness covers every breach of faith, and makes his veriest schemes seem purely accident. But, once get the repute of being a clever or a smart fellow, and success is tenfold more difficult. The world, then, only plays with you as one does with a sharper, betting small stakes, and keeping a steady eye on the cards. Your own sleepy eye, Charley, your languid, careless look, are a better provision than most men give their younger children."

Lord Charles lifted his long eyelashes lazily, and, for a second, something like a sparkle lit up his cold, dark eye, but it was gone in a moment, and his habitually lethargic expression once more returned. "You heard that we were nearly 'out,' I suppose?" said he, after a pause.

"Yes. This is the second time that I bought Downie Meek's carriage-horses on the rumour of a change of administration."

"And sold them back again at double the price, when he found that the ministry were safe!"

"To be sure; wasn't it a 'good hedge' for him to be Secretary for Ireland at the cost of a hundred or so?"

"You'll get the name of spreading the false intelligence, Tom, if you always profit so much by it."

"With all my heart. I wish sincerely some good-natured fellow would lay to my charge a little roguery that I had no share in. I have experienced all manner and shades of sensations, but injured innocence, that would really be new to me."

"Well," sighed Lord Charles, with a yawn, 'I suppose we have only a short time before us here. The end of the session will scarcely see us in office."

"About that: by keeping all hands at the pumps we may float the ship into harbour, but no more."

"And what's to become of us?" said the Aide-de-camp, with a deep depression in his accent.

"The usual lot of a crew paid off," cried Linton, laughing; "look out for a new craft in commission, and go to sea again. As for you, Charley, you can either marry something in the printed-calico line, with a hundred and fifty thousand, or, if you prefer it, exchange into a light cavalry corps at Suntanterabund."

"And you?" said Lord Charles, with something almost of sternness.

"I? Oh, as for me, I have many alternatives. I can remain a Whig, and demand office from the Tories—a claim Peel has never resisted. I can turn Repealer, and be pensioned by something in the Colonies. I can be a waiter on Providence, and live on all parties by turns. In fact, Charley, there never was a better age for your 'adventurer' than this year of our Lord 18—. All the geography of party has been erased, and it is open to every man to lay down new territorial limits."

"But for any case of the kind you should have a seat in Parliament."

"So I mean it, my boy. I intend to represent——I'm sure I forget the name of my constituency—in the next assemblage of the collective wisdom.

"How do you manage the qualification?" said the Aide-de-camp, slyly.

"The man who gives the borough must take care of that; it's no affair of mine," said Linton, carelessly. "I only supply the politics."

"And what are they to be?"

"*Cela dépend.* You might as well ask me what dress I'll wear in the changeable climate of an Irish July."

"Then you'll take no pledges?"

"To be sure I will; every one asked of me. I only stipulate to accompany each with a crotchet of my own, so that, like the gentleman who emptied his snuff-box over the peas, I'll leave the dish uneatable by any but myself."

"Well, good-by, Tom," said Lord Charles, laughing. "If you only be as loyal in love as you promise to be in politics, our fair friend is scarcely fortunate." And so saying, he cantered slowly away.

"Poor fellow!" said Linton, contemptuously, "your little bit of principle haunts you like a superstition." And with this reflection, he stepped out briskly to where the boy was standing with his horse.

"Oh, Mr. Linton, darlin', only sixpence! and I here this two hours?" said the ragged urchin, with a cunning leer, half roguery, half shame.

"And where could you have earned sixpence, you scoundrel, in that time?" cried Linton, affecting anger.

"Faix, I'd have earned half-a-crown if I'd got up on the beast and rode down to Bilton's," said the fellow, grinning.

"You'd have had your skull cracked with this cane the next time I met you for your pains," said the other, really enraged, while he chucked a shilling at him.

"Success to your honour—all's right," said the boy. And touching his cap, he scampered off into the wood, and disappeared.

"You shall have a sea voyage, my friend," said Linton, looking after him; "a young gentleman with such powers of observation would have a fine opening in our colonies." And away he rode towards town, his brain revolving many a complex scheme and lucky stratagem, but still with ready smile acknowledging each salutation of his friends, and conveying the impression of being one whose easy nature was unruffled by a care.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DOMESTIC DETECTIVE CONSULTED.

Of "sweet fifteen" no mortal e'er afraid is,
Your real "man-traps" are old maiden ladies
THE LEGACY

It was late of that same afternoon ere Cashel awoke. Mr. Phillis had twice adventured into the room on tiptoe, and as stealthily retired, and was now, for the third time, about to retreat, when Roland called him back.

"Beg pardon, Sir; but Mrs. Kennyfeck's footman has been here twice for the answer to this note."

"Let me see it," said Cashel, taking a highly-perfumed epistle, whose

tinted paper, seal, and superscription were all in the perfection of epistolary coquetry.

"DEAR MR. CASHEL,—Mamma desires me to convey her reproaches for your shocking forgetfulness of yesterday, when, after promising to dine here, you never appeared. She will, however, not only forgive the past, but be grateful for the present, if you will come to us to-day at seven.

"Believe me, very truly yours,

"OLIVIA KENNYFECK."

Simple and common-place as the words were, Cashel read them over more than once.

I know not if any of my male readers can corroborate me, but I have always thought there is some mysterious attraction in even the most every-day epistle of a young and pretty woman. The commonest social forms assume a different meaning, and we read the four letters which spell "dear" in any acceptation very remote from what they inspire when written by one's law agent; and then, the concluding "yours truly," or "faithfully yours," or better again, "ever yours," what suggestive little words they are! how insinuating in their portraiture of a tie, which possibly might, but does not, actually bind the parties.

If my readers concur not in these sympathies, I have great satisfaction in saying that Roland Cashel did. He not only sat gazing at the few lines, but he looked so long at them as to half believe that the first word was a superlative; then, suddenly rousing himself, he asked the hour. It was already past six. He had only time, then, for a verbal "With pleasure," and to dress for dinner.

It seemed like a reproach on his late mode of living, the pile of unopened letters, which in imposing mass Mr. Phillis had arrayed on his master's dressing-table. They contained specimens of everything epistolary which falls to the lot of those favoured children of fortune who, having "much to give," are great favourites with the world. There were dear little pressing invitations signed by the lady of the house, and indited in all the caligraphy of the governess. There were begging letters from clergymen with large families, men who gave so "many hostages to fortune," that they actually ruined themselves in their own "recognisances." Flatteries, which, if not written on tinted paper, might have made it blush to bear them, mixed up with tradesmen's assurances of fidelity and punctuality, and bashful apologies for the indelicacy of any allusion to money.

Oh, it is a very sweet world this of ours, and amiable withal! save that the angelic smile it bestows on one part of the creation has a sorry counter

part in the sardonic grin with which it regards the other. Our friend Cashel was in the former category, and he tossed over the letters carelessly, rarely breaking a seal, and, even then, satisfied with a mere glance at the contents, or the name of the writer, when he suddenly caught sight of a large square-shaped epistle, marked "Sea letter." It was in a hand he well knew, that of his old comrade Enrique, and burning with anxiety to hear of him, he threw himself into a chair, and broke the seal.

The very first words which met his eye shocked him.

'St. Kitt's, Jamaica.

"Ay, Roland, even so. St. Kitt's, Jamaica! heavily ironed in a cell at the top of a strong tower over the sea, with an armed sentry at my door, I write this! a prisoner fettered and chained, I, that could not brook the very orders of discipline! Well, well, it is only cowardice to repine. Truth is, amigo, I've had no luck since you left us. It was doubtless yours that sustained me so long, and when *you* withdrew from the firm, I became bankrupt, and yet, this is pretty much what we used once, in merry mood, to predict for each other, 'the loop and the leap.'

"How shall I tell you so briefly as neither to weary you to read, nor myself to write it, my last sad misfortune. I say the last, because the bad luck took a run against me. First, I lost everything I possessed at play—the very pistols you sent me, I staked and lost. Worse still, Roland—and faith I don't think I could make the confession, if a few hours, or a few days more, were not to hide my shame in a felon's grave—I played the jewels you sent here for Maritaña. She refused them with words of bitterness and anger. Partly from the irritated feeling of the moment, partly from the curse of a gambler's spirit—the hope to weary out the malice of Fortune—I threw them on the Monte-table. Of course I lost. It was soon after this Barcelonetta was laid in ruin by a shock of earthquake, the greatest ever experienced here. The 'Quadro' is a mere mass of chaotic rubbish. The 'Puerta Mayor,' with all its statues, is engulphed, and an arm of the sea now washes up and over the beautiful gardens where the Governor gave his fête. The Villa, too, rent from roof to basement, is a ruin; vast yawning gulfs intersect the parterres everywhere; the fountains are dried up; the trees blasted by lightning; and a red-brown surface of ashes strewn over the beauteous turf where we used to stroll by moonlight. The old tree that sheltered our Monte-table stands uninjured, as if in mockery over our disasters! Maritaña's hammock was slung beneath the branches, and there she lay, careless of—nay, I could almost say, if the words did not seem too strange for truth, actually pleased by—the dreadful event. I went to take leave of her; it was the last night we were to spend

on shore. I little knew it was to be the last time we should ever meet. Pedro passed the night among the ruins of the Villa, endeavouring to recover papers and valuables amid that disastrous mass. Geizheimer was always with him, and as Noronja and the rest soon fell off to sleep, wearied by a day of great fatigue, I sat alone beside her hammock till day was breaking. Oh, would that night could have lasted for years, so sweetly tranquil were the starlit hours, so calm and yet so full of hopeful promise. What brilliant pictures of ambition did she, that young, untaught girl, present to my eyes—how teach me to long for a cause whose rewards were higher, and greater, and nobler than the prizes of this wayward life. I would have spoken of my affection, my deep-felt, long-cherished love, but, with a half-scornful laugh, she stopped me, saying, 'Is this leafy shade so like a fair lady's boudoir that you can persuade yourself to trifle thus, or is your own position so dazzling that you deem the offer to share it a flattery?'"

"I'm afraid, Sir," said Mr. Phillis, here obtruding his head into the room, "that you'll be very late. It is already more than half-past seven o'clock."

"So it is!" exclaimed Cashel, starting up, while he muttered something not exceedingly complimentary to his host's engagement. "Is the carriage ready?" And without staying to hear the reply, hurried down stairs, the open letter still in his hand.

Scarcely seated in the carriage, Cashel resumed the reading of the letter. Eager to trace the circumstances which led to his friend's captivity, he hastily ran his eyes over the lines till he came to the following: "There could be no doubt of it. The *Esmeralda*, our noble frigate, was not in the service of the Republic, but by some infamous treaty between Pedro and Narochez, the minister, was permitted to carry the flag of Columbia. We were slavers, buccaneers, pirates—not sailors of a state. When, therefore, the British war-brig *Scorpion* sent a gun across our bows, with an order to lie to, and we replied by showing our main-deck ports open, and our long eighteens all ready, the challenge could not be mistaken. We were near enough to hear the cheering, and it seemed, too, they heard ours; we wanted but you, Roland, among us to have made our excitement madness!"

The carriage drew up at Kennyfeck's door as Cashel had read thus far, and in a state of mind bordering on fever he entered the hall and passed up the stairs. The clock struck eight as he presented himself in the drawing-room, where the family were assembled, the number increased by two strangers, who were introduced to Roland as Mrs. Kennyfeck's sister, Miss O'Hara, an elderly maiden lady, with a light brown wig; and a raw-boned, much-freckled young man, Peter O'Gorman, her nephew.

Nothing could be more cordial than the reception of the Kennyfecks;

they affected not to think that it was so late, vowed that the clock was too fast, were certain that Mr. Cashel's watch was right; in fact, his presence was a receipt in full for all the anxieties of delay, and so they made him feel it.

There was a little quizzing of Roland, as they seated themselves at table, over his forgetfulness of the day before, but so good-humouredly as not to occasion, even to himself, the slightest embarrassment.

"At breakfast at the barrack!" repeated Miss Kennyfeck after him. "What a formidable affair, if it always lasts twenty-four hours."

"What do you mean? How do you know that?" asked Roland, half in shame, half in surprise, at this knowledge of his movements.

"Not to speak of the brilliant conversation, heightened by all the excitement of wit, champagne, and hazard—dreadful competitors with such tiresome society as ours," said Olivia.

"Never mind them, Mr. Cashel," broke in Miss O'Hara, in a mellifluous Doric; "'tis jealous they are, because you liked the officers better than themselves."

A most energetic dissent was entered by Cashel to this supposition, who nevertheless felt grateful for the advocacy of the old lady.

"When I was in the Cape Coast Fencibles," broke in Peter, with an accent that would have induced one to believe Africa was on the Shannon, "we used to sit up all night,—it was so hot in the day; but we always called it breakfast, for you see——"

"And when are we to visit your pictures, Mr. Cashel?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, whose efforts to suppress Peter were not merely vocal, as that injured individual's shins might attest.

"That depends entirely on you, Madam," said Roland, bowing. "I have only to say, the earlier the more agreeable to me."

"He has such a beautiful collection," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, turning to her sister.

"Indeed, then, I delight in pictures," said "Aunt Fanny," as her nieces called her. "I went the other day to Mount Bennett, to see a portrait painted by Rousseau."

"By Rubens, I suppose you mean, Aunt," interposed Miss Kennyfeck tartly.

"So it may be, my dear, I never know the names right; but it was a dark old man, with a hairy cap and a long grey beard, as like Father Morris Heffernan as ever it could stare."

"Is your new Carlo Dolce so very like Olivia?" interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck, who was sadly hampered by her country relatives and their reminiscences.

"So very like, Madam, that I beg you to accept it as a portrait," replied Roland.

"Upon my word, then, young gentleman, you're not so fond of a pretty face as you might be," broke in Aunt Fanny, "or you wouldn't be so ready to give it away." A very hearty laugh at the old lady's eccentricity relieved Cashel from all necessity of explanation.

"The old masters are so good," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "I delight in their fine vigorous touch."

"Why don't they put more clothes on their figures," said Aunt Fanny "even a warm climate is no excuse for the way the creatures went about."

"If you saw them in Hickweretickanookee," said Peter, "King John never wore anything but a cocked-hat and a pair of short black gaiters the missionary gave him for learning the Lord's Prayer."

"I hear that Lady Janet said Cary would be an excellent study for Helen M'Gregor," said Mrs. Kennyfeck. "It was scarcely civil, however."

"It was more—downright rude," said Cashel, reddening; "but Miss Kennyfeck can afford to pay the penalty beauty always yields to its opposite."

"There, my dear, that's a compliment," said Aunt Fanny, "and don't be displeased. I say, darling, didn't he say a while ago you were like somebody at Carlow?"

"A Carlo Dolce, Aunt," broke in both sisters, laughing; and so the dinner proceeded amid common-places, relieved occasionally from their flatness by the absurdities of Aunt Fanny, who seemed as good-naturedly proof against ridicule as she was likely to evoke it.

Peter was the first to rise from table, as he was anxious to go to "the play," and the ladies soon retired to the drawing-room, Mrs. Kennyfeck slyly whispering, as she passed behind Roland's chair, an entreaty that he would not long delay in following them. Cashel's anxiety to close his *tête-à-tête* arose from another cause—his burning anxiety to finish Enrique's letter; while Kennyfeck himself seemed beating about, uncertain how to open subjects he desired to have discussed. After a long pause, he said:

"I was speaking to Pepystell yesterday, and he is of opinion that there is no use in preserving any part of the old structure at Tubbermore—the great difficulty of adapting a new character of architecture to the old would not repay the cost."

Cashel nodded a careless assent, and, after a pause, Kennyfeck resumed:

"It might be of some convenience at present, however, to let the building stand as it is. A residence of one kind or other you will want, particularly as the elections are approaching."

Another nod in silence was all the reply.

"Pepystell's estimate is large—don't you think so?"

He nodded again.

"Nearly seventy thousand pounds! And that does not include the gate tower, which seems a point for after consideration."

"I remember," muttered Cashel, in a voice that implied anything rather than a mind attentive to the subject before it.

"Now, it would be as well," said Mr. Kennyfeck, drawing a long breath, and as it were preparing himself for a great effort, "to put a little order into our affairs. Your first year or two will be costly ones—building expenses, equipage, horses, furniture, election charges. Much of your capital is vested in foreign securities, which it would be injurious to sell at this moment. Don't you think"—here he changed his voice to an almost insinuating softness—"don't you think that by devoting a certain portion of your income—say a third, or one-half, perhaps—for the present, to meet these charges——" He paused, for he saw from Cashel's occupied look that he was not attending to his words.

"Well—continue," said Roland, affecting to wait for his conclusion.

"I was about to ask, Sir," said Kennyfeck, boldly, "what sum would you deem sufficient for your yearly expenditure?"

"What is the amount of my income?" asked Cashel, bluntly.

"In good years, something above sixteen thousand pounds; in bad ones, somewhat less than twelve."

"Well, then—you have the scale of my expenditure at once."

"Not your whole income?" exclaimed Kennyfeck, astonished.

"Even so. I see no earthly reason for hoarding. I do not find that squandering money is any very high enjoyment; I am certain scraping and saving it would afford me still less pleasure."

"But there are always casualties demanding extraordinary expense—a contested election, for instance."

"I'll not try it—I don't intend to enter Parliament."

"When you marry——"

"Perhaps I shall not do that either."

"Well, sums lost at play—the turf has pressed on many a strong pocket."

"Play has no fascination for me, I can give it up—I may almost say I have done so."

"Not without paying a heavy penalty, however," said Kennyfeck, whose animation showed that he had at last approached the territory he was so long in search of.

"How do you mean?" said Cashel, blushing deeply, as he began to fear

that by some accident his secret visit to the money-lender had reached Kennyfeck's ears.

"Your drafts on Latrobe, Sir, whose account I have received to-day, are very heavy."

"Oh, is that all?" said Cashel, carelessly.

"All! all!" repeated Kennyfeck; then, suddenly correcting himself, he added, "I am almost certain, Sir, that your generous habits have overmastered your prudence. Are you aware of having drawn fifty thousand pounds?"

"No, I really was not," replied Cashel, smiling more at the attorney's look of consternation than anything else. "I fancied about half as much. Pray tell me some of the items. No, no, not from book; that looks too formal—just from memory."

"Well, there are horses without number—one bought with all his engagements for the Oaks, which amount to a forfeiture of four thousand pounds."

"I remember that—a piece of Linton's blundering; but he lost more heavily himself, poor fellow, our steed Lanzknecht having turned out a dead failure."

"Then there is something about a villa at Cowes, which I am certain you never saw."

"No; but I have a drawing of it somewhere—a pretty thing under a cliff, with a beautiful bay of deep water, and good anchorage. Linton knows all about it."

"Twelve thousand pounds is a large sum to give without ever seeing the purchase."

"So it is—but go on."

"I cannot remember one-half; but there is plate and jewels; sums advanced for building; subscriptions to everything and everybody; a heavy amount transmitted to the Havannah."

"Very true; and that reminds me of a letter which I received at the very moment I was leaving home. Have I your leave to finish the reading? It is from an old and valued comrade."

"Of course—don't think of me for an instant," said Kennyfeck, scarcely able to repress an open acknowledgment of his amazement at the coolness which could turn from so interesting a topic to the, doubtless commonplace, narrative of some Mexican sailor.

Cashel was, meanwhile, searching every pocket for the letter, which he well remembered, after reading in the carriage, to have crushed in his hand as he ascended the stairs. "I have dropped this letter," said he, in a voice of great agitation. "May I ask if your servants have found it?"

The bell was rung, and the butler at once interrogated. He had seen nothing, neither had the footman. They both remembered, however, that Mr. Phillis had accompanied his master to the foot of the stairs to receive some directions, and then left him to return with the carriage.

"So, then, Phillis must have found it," said Cashel, rising hastily; and, without a word of apology or excuse, he bade his host a hurried good evening, and left the room.

"Won't you have the carriage? Will you not stay for a cup of tea?" cried Mr. Kennyfeck, hastening after him. But the hall-door had already banged heavily behind him, and he was gone. When Cashel reached his house, it was to endure increased anxiety, for Mr. Phillis had gone out, and, like a true gentleman's gentleman, none of the other servants knew anything of his haunts, or when he would return. Leaving Cashel, then, to the tortures of a suspense which his fervid nature made almost intolerable, we shall return for a brief space to the house he had just quitted, and to the drawing-room, where, in momentary expectation of his appearance, the ladies sat, maintaining that species of "staccato" conversation which can afford interruption with least inconvenience. It is our duty to add, that we bring the reader back here less with any direct object as to what is actually going forward, than to make him better acquainted with the new arrival.

Had Miss O'Hara been the mere quiet, easy-going, simple-minded elderly maiden she seemed to Cashel's eyes, the step on our part had not been needed; she might, like some other characters of our tale, have been suffered to glide by, as ghosts or stage-supernumeraries do, unquestioned and undetained, but she possessed qualities of a kind to demand somewhat more consideration. Aunt Fanny, to give her the title by which she was best known, was, in reality, a person of the keenest insight into others—reading people at sight, and endowed with a species of intuitive perception of all the possible motives which lead to any action. Residing totally in a small town in the west of Ireland, she rarely visited the capital, and was now, in fact, brought up "special" by her sister, Mrs. Kennyfeck, who desired to have her advice and counsel on the prospect of securing Cashel for one or other of her daughters. It was so far a wise step, that in such a conjuncture no higher opinion could have been obtained.

"It was like getting a private hint from the Chancellor about a cause in equity." This was Mr. Kennyfeck's own illustration.

Aunt Fanny was then there in the guise of a Domestic Detective, to watch proceedings and report on them—a function which simplifies the due conduct of a case, be it in love or law, beyond anything.

"How agreeable your papa must be this evening, my dear," said Mrs.

Kennyfeck, as with a glance at the clock on the mantelpiece she recognised that it was near ten.

"I'm sure he is deep in one of his interminable law arguments, which always makes Mr. Cashel so sleepy and so stupid, that he never recovers for the rest of the evening."

"He ought to find the drawing-room all the pleasanter for the contrast," remarked Miss O'Hara, drily. "I like to see young men—mind me well, young men, it doesn't do with old ones—thoroughly bored before they come among the ladies. The sudden change to the tea, and the wax-lights, and the bright eyes, are trying stimulants. Let them, however, be what they call 'pleasant' below stairs, and they are sure to come up flushed and excited, well satisfied with the host's claret, and only anxious to order the carriage. What a clock is it now?"

"A quarter past ten, Aunt."

"Too late; full three-quarters too late," ejaculated she, with the tone of an oracle. "There is nothing your father could have to say should have detained him till now. Play that little Mexican thing again, my dear; and, Livy, love, leave the door a little open; don't you find the heat of this room intolerable?"

The young ladies obeyed, and meanwhile Aunt Fanny, drawing her chair closer to her sister's, said, in a low tone:

"Well, explain the matter more clearly. Did he give her the diamonds?"

"No; that is the strangest of all," responded Mrs. Kennyfeck. "He just told Leonard to send them home, and we never heard more about them."

Aunt Fanny shook her head.

"You know, he asked Olivia, as they were going down stairs, what she thought of them; and she replied, 'They're beautiful.'"

"How did she say it, though; was it like a mere casual remark, or did she make it with feeling?"

"With feeling," echoed Mrs. Kennyfeck, pursing up her lips.

"Well?"

"Well! he just said, 'I'll take them,' and there was an end of it."

Aunt Fanny seemed to reflect, and, after some time, said:

"Now, as to the horse, when did he make her a present of that?"

"It was to Caroline he gave the horse; sure I told you already."

"Very true, so you did: a bad feature of the case, too! She ought to have declined it somehow."

"So she would," broke in Mrs. Kennyfeck; "but, you perceive, it was very doubtful, at the time, which of the girls he preferred."

"And you tell me this Mr. Linton has such influence over him."

"The most absolute. It is only a few weeks since they became acquainted, and now they are inseparable."

"What is he like—Linton himself?"

Mrs. Kennyfeck gave a most significant signal, by closing up her lips, and slowly nodding her head—a gesture that seemed well understood.

"Does Kennyfeck know nothing of his affairs—has he no private history of the man, which might be useful to us?"

"Don't think of that, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, knowingly; "but here they come at last." This was said with reference to the sound of footsteps on the stairs, which gradually approached, and at last Mr. Kennyfeck made his appearance in the drawing-room.

"Where is Mr. Cashel—is he gone?" asked Mrs. Kennyfeck, in an accent of unusual anxiety.

"He went away above an hour ago. He wanted to see a letter, or to write one, or to look for one he had lost—I forget which."

"I'm certain you do!" observed Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an expression of unequivocal contempt. "I am perfectly certain we need not look to you for either information or assistance."

Poor Mr. Kennyfeck was dumbfoundered. The very words were riddles to him, and he turned to each person about him in silent entreaty for explanation—but none came.

"What had you been conversing about?" asked Aunt Fanny, in that encouraging tone lawyers sometimes use to draw out a reluctant or bashful witness.

"Of his money affairs, Miss O'Hara; and I am grieved to say that the subject had so little interest for him, that he started up and left me on suddenly remembering something about a letter."

"Which something you have totally forgotten," remarked Mrs. Kennyfeck, tartly.

"And yet it would be a most important fact for us," observed Aunt Fanny, with judicial solemnity; "a letter, whether to read or to write, of such pressing necessity, implies much."

"Come, Livy, dear," said Miss Kennyfeck, rising from the pianoforte, and addressing her sister, who sat reading on the sofa, "*my* canzonette and *your* beautiful attitude are so much sweetness thrown away. He's gone without even a thought of either! There, there, don't look so innocently vacant—you understand me perfectly."

A very gentle smile was all the younger sister's reply as she left the room.

"Depend upon it, my dear," said Miss O'Hara to Mrs. Kennyfeck, "that

young man had made some unhappy connexion, that's the secret of this letter, and when they get into a scrape of the kind it puts marriage out of their heads altogether. It was the same with Captain Morris"—here she whispered still lower, the only audible words being, "without my ever suspecting—one evening—a low creature—never set eyes upon—ah, man, man!" And with this exclamation aloud, Aunt Fanny took her candle and retired.

About a minute after, however, she re-entered the drawing-room, and advancing close to her sister, said, with all the solemnity of deep thought:

"Peter is no good in this case, my dear; send him home at once. That man will 'blaze' for the asking." And with a nod of immense significance she finally withdrew.

## CHAPTER XX.

### HOW ENRIQUE'S LETTER WAS LOST AND FOUND.

Arcades ambo—Blackguards both!

In the window of a very pretty cottage-room overlooking the Liffey, and that romantic drive so well known to Dubliners as the "low road" to Lucan, sat Tom Linton. He was enjoying a cigar and a glass of weak negus, as a man may enjoy such luxuries seated in the easiest of chairs, looking out upon one of the sweetest of woodland landscapes, and feeling the while that the whole was "his own." If conscientious scruples had been any part of that gentleman's life philosophy, he might have suffered some misgivings, seeing that the cottage itself, its furniture, the plate, the very horses in the stable and the grooms about it, had been won at the hazard-table, and from one whose beggary ended in suicide. But Linton did not dwell on such things, and if they did for an instant cross his mind, he dismisssd them at once with a contemptuous pity for the man who could not build up a fortune by the arts with which he had lost one. He had not begun the world himself with much principle, and all his experiences went to prove that even less would suffice, and that for the purposes of the station he occupied, and the society he frequented, it was only necessary that he should not transgress in his dealings with men of a certain rank and condition; so that, while every transaction with people of class and fashion should be strictly on "the square," he was at perfect liberty to practise any number of sharp

things with all beneath them. It was the old axiom of knight-errantry adapted to our own century, which made every weapon fair used against the plebeian!

From a pleasant reverie over some late successes and some future ones in anticipation, he was aroused by a gentle tap at the door.

"Come in," said he; "I think I guess who it is—Phillis, eh?"

"Yes, Sir, you're quite correct," said that individual, advancing from the misty twilight of the room, which was only partly lighted by a single alabaster lamp. "I thought I'd find you at home, Sir, and I knew this letter might interest you. He dropped it when going up the stairs at Kennyfeck's, and could scarcely have read it through."

"Sit down, George—sit down, man—what will you take? I see you've had a fast drive; if that was your car I heard on the road, your pace was tremendous. What shall it be—claret—sherry—brandy-and-water?"

"If you please, Sir, sherry. I have lost all palate for Bordeaux since I came to Mr. Cashel. We get abominable wine from Cullan."

"So I remarked myself; but this must be looked to. Come, try that; it's some of Gordon's, and he would not send a bad bottle to me."

"I'm very certain of that, Sir. It is excellent."

"Now then for the epistle." So saying, he lighted a taper and prepared to read. "Jamaica—oh, a shipmate's letter."

"A curious one, too, Sir, as you'll say when you read it."

Linton, without reply, began to read, nor did he break silence till he finished, when, laying down the paper, he said, "And this very fellow who writes this he actually spoke of inviting to Ireland—to stay some time at his house—to be introduced, in fact, to his acquaintances as a personal friend."

"It's very sad, Sir," sighed Phillis. "I have long been of opinion that I must leave him. The appointments, it is true, are good, perquisites, too very handsome—but the future, Mr. Linton—what a future it will be!"

"It need not be a very near one, at all events," said Linton, smiling; "you've read this?"

"Just threw an eye over it, Sir!"

"Well, you see that your excellent master has been little better than pirate or a slaver."

"Very shocking, indeed, Sir!"

"Of course this must not get abroad, George."

"It would ruin me utterly, Sir."

"To be sure it would. No nobleman, nor any gentleman of rank or fashion, could think of engaging your services after such an appointment.

Happily, George, you may not require such, if you only mind your hits. Your master can afford to make your fortune, and never know himself the poorer. Come, how go on matters latterly at No. 50?"

"Pretty much as usual, Sir; two dinner-parties last week."

"I know all about them, though I affected to be engaged and didn't dine there. What I want is, to hear of these Kennyfecks—do they come much after him?"

"Only once, Sir, when they came to see the house and stopped to luncheon."

"Well, was he particular in his attentions to either of the daughters?"

"Very attentive, indeed, Sir, to the younger. She dropped her handkerchief in the gallery, and ran back for it, and so did he, Sir."

"You followed, of course?"

"I did, Sir, and she was blushing very much as I came in, and I heard her say something about 'forgiving him,' and then, they left the room."

"And what of Kennyfeck, has he had any conversations with him on business?"

"None, Sir; I have strictly followed your orders, and never admitted him."

"Lord Charles Frobisher was a large winner t'other night?" said Linton, after a pause.

"Yes, Sir, so I heard them say at supper, and Mr. Cashel first gave him a cheque and then changed his mind, and I saw him hand over a heavy sum in notes."

"Indeed!" muttered Linton to himself; "and my worthy friend Charley did not confess this to me. — Have you taken care that the people don't send in their bills and accounts, as I mentioned?"

"Yes, Sir; with few exceptions, nothing of the kind comes."

"What brought that Mr. Clare Jones so frequently of late?"

"He came twice in Mr. Downie Meek's carriage, Sir, but sat all the while outside, while Mr. Meek was with my master; the third day, however, he was sent for to come in, and spent nearly an hour in the study."

"Well, what took place?"

"I could only hear part of the conversation, Sir, as I feared I might be sent for. The subject was a seat in Parliament, which Mr. Cashel owns, and that Mr. Meek is desirous of procuring for Jones."

"Ha! ha! my little Judas! is that your game? Go on, George, this interests me."

"I have little more to tell, Sir, for Mr. Meek always speaks so low, and my master scarcely said anything."

"And Jones?"

"He merely remarked on the identity of his political principles with those of the present Government."

"Of course; the fellow began as a Radical, and then turned Tory, and now is a Whig. Blue and yellow when mixed always make green. But how did it end?"

"As well as I could perceive, Sir, without any promise. My master was to deliberate and send his answer."

"Let neither have access to him till you hear from me again—mark that."

"You shall be obeyed, Sir."

"Did Lord Kilgoff call?"

"Twice, Sir; but my master was out. I followed your directions, however, and said that her Ladyship was with him, and he seemed much provoked at not finding him at home."

"Well, how did he take it—did he make any remark?"

"A half smile, Sir; nothing more."

"But said nothing?"

"Not a word, Sir."

Linton arose and walked the room in deep meditation; at last he said,

"You had better let him have those letters we held back the last two days, to-day. He'll not think deeply over his losses on the Derby while dwelling on this missing letter."

"I don't suspect his losses, Sir, will cause much uneasiness on any score; money occupies very little of his thoughts."

"True; but here the sum is a very heavy one. I made the book myself, and stood to win thirty thousand pounds; but, no matter, it can't be helped now—better luck another time. Now, another point. It strikes me of late, that he seems bored somewhat by the kind of life he is leading, and that these carouses at the messes are becoming just as distasteful to him as the heavy dinner-parties with the Dean and the rest of them. Is that your opinion?"

"Perfectly, Sir. He even said as much to me t'other evening, when he came back from a late supper. He is always wishing for the yacht to come over—speaks every now and then of taking a run over to London and Paris—in fact, Sir, he *is* bored here. There is no disguising it."

"I feared as much, George; I suspected, many a day ago, he would not be long satisfied with the provincial boards. But this must not be; once away from Dublin, he is lost to us for ever. I know, and so do you know, the hands he would fall into in town. Better let him get back to his old prairie haunts, for a while, than that."

"Not so very unlikely, Sir. He sits poring over maps and charts for

hours together, and scans the new coast survey like a man bent on exploring the scenes for himself. It is hard to say what is best to do with him."

"I'll tell you what he must not be permitted to do with himself: he must not leave Ireland—he must not marry—he must not enter Parliament—and, for the moment, to employ his thoughts and banish *ennui*, we'll get up the house-warming at Tubbermore. I mean to set off thither to-morrow."

"Without Mr. Cashel, Sir?"

"Of course; be it your care that matters are well looked to in my absence, and as Kennyfeck's house is safer than the barracks, he may dine there as often as he pleases. Keep a watch on Jones—not that I think he'll be very dangerous; see after Lord Charles, whether he may try to profit by my absence; and, above all, write me a bulletin each day."

Mr. Phillis promised a strict obedience to orders, and rose to retire, pleading the necessity of his being at home when his master returned.

"What of this letter, Sir?" Shall I contrive to place it in his pocket, and discover it as he is undressing? He never suspects anything or anybody."

"No, George, I'll keep it; it may turn out useful to us one of these days, there's no knowing when or how. I'm curious, too, to see how he will act with reference to it—whether he will venture on any confidence towards me. I suspect not; he never alludes to his bygones. The only terror his mind is capable of would seem the fear of fashionable contempt. If he ever lose this, he's lost to us for ever." This was said rather in soliloquy than addressed to Phillis, who did not appear to catch the meaning of the remark. "You'll leave this note on his table, and take care he sees it. It is to remind him of an appointment here to-morrow with Hoare, the money-lender, at eleven o'clock, punctually."

Phillis took the note, and after a very respectful leave-taking, withdrew.

"Yes," said Linton, musing, as he leaned against the window, "all goes fairly so far. Mr. Phillis may live to see himself once more a Merchant-Tailor in Cheapside, and Tom Linton, under the buckler of his M.P., defy duns and bums, and be again a denizen of the only city worth living in."

He then reseated himself in an easy-chair, and prepared to con over the letter, to which he had only given a passing attention. The narrative of Enrique, full of exciting details and hair-breadth 'scapes, was, however, far less an object of interest to Linton than the consideration how far a character like this might be made use of for the purpose of threat and intimidation over Cashel.

His reflections ran somewhat thus: The day may come,—is, perhaps, even now nigh,—when Cashel shall reject my influence and ascendancy. There

never has been anything which could even counterfeit friendship between us—close intimacy has been all. To maintain that hold over him so necessary to my fortunes, I must be in a position to menace. Roland, himself, has opened the way to this by his own reserve. The very concealment he has practised implies fear;—otherwise, why, in all the openness of our familiar intercourse, never have mentioned Enrique's name; still more never once alluded to this Maritaña? It is clear enough with what shame he looks back on the past. Let mine be the task to increase that feeling, and build up the fear of the world's ridicule, till he shall be the slave of every whisper that syllables his name! The higher his path in society, the greater the depth to which disclosures may consign him; and what disclosures so certainly ruinous as to connect him with the lawless marauders of the Spanish Main—the slaver and the pirate? His dear friend, a felon, taken in open fight by a British cruiser! Maritaña, too, may serve us; her name as mistress—or, if need be, as wife—will effectually oppose any matrimonial speculations here. So far, this letter has been a rare piece of fortune!

For some moments he walked the room with excited and animated looks, the alternating shades of pleasure and its opposite flitting rapidly across his strong features. At last he broke out in words: "Ay, Cashel, I am as suddenly enriched as yourself,—but with a different heritage. Yours was Gold. Mine, Revenge! And there are many to whom I could pay the old debt home. There's Forster, with his story of Ascot, and his black-ball at Graham's!—a double debt, with years of heavy interest upon it. There's Howard, too, that closed his book at Tattersall's, after tearing out the leaf that had my name! Frobisher himself daring his petty insolence at every turn!—all these cry for acquittance, and shall have it. There are few men of my own standing, that with moneyed means at my command, I could not ruin! And, ungallant as the boast may be, some fair ladies, too! How I have longed for the day, how I have schemed and plotted for it! and now it comes almost unlooked for.

"Another month or two of this wasteful extravagance, and Cashel will be deeply, seriously embarrassed. Kennyfeck will suggest retrenchment and economy; that shall be met with an insidious doubt of the good man's honesty. And how easy to impeach it! The schemes of his wife and daughter will aid the accusation. Roland shall, meanwhile, learn the discomfort of being 'hard up.' The importunity—nay, the insolence—of duns shall assail him at every post and every hour. From this there is but one bold, short step—and take it he must—make me his agent. That done, all the rest is easy. Embarrassment and injurious reports will soon drive him from the country, and from an estate he shall never revisit as his own! So far

—the first act of the drama. The second discovers Tom Linton the owner of Tubbermore, and the host of Lord and Lady Kilgoff, who have condescendingly agreed to pass the Easter recess with him. Mr. Linton has made a very splendid maiden speech, which, however, puzzles the Ministers and the *Times*, and, if he were not a man perfectly indifferent to place, would expose him to the imputation of courting it.

"And Laura all this while!" said he, in a voice whose accents trembled with intense feeling, "can she forgive the past? Will old memories revive old affections, or will they rot into hatred? Well," cried he, sternly, "whichever way they turn, I'm prepared."

There was a tone of triumphant meaning in his last words that seemed to thrill through his frame, and as he threw himself back upon a seat, and gazed out upon the starry sky, his features wore the look of proud and insolent defiance. "So is it," said he, after a pause; "one must be alone—friendless, and alone—in life, to dare the world so fearlessly." He filled a goblet of sherry, and, as he drank it off, cried, "Courage! Tom Linton against 'the field!'"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CONSPIRATORS DISTURBED.

> Eternal friendship let us swear,
> In fraud at least—"nous serons frères."
>
> ROBERT MACAIRE.

CASHEL passed a night of feverish anxiety. Enrique's uncertain fate was never out of his thoughts; and if for a moment he dropped off to sleep, he immediately awoke with a sudden start,—some fancied cry for help,—some heart-uttered appeal to him for assistance breaking in upon his weary slumber.

How ardently did he wish for some one friend to whom he might confide his difficulty, and from whom receive advice and counsel. Linton's shrewdness and knowledge of life pointed him out as the fittest; but how to reveal to his fashionable friend the secrets of that buccaneering life he had himself so lately quitted? How expose himself to the dreaded depreciation a "fine gentleman" might visit on a career passed amid slavers and pirates? A month or two previous, he could not have understood such scruples; but already the frivolities and excesses of daily habit had thrown an air of

savage rudeness over the memory of his Western existence, and he had not the courage to brave the comments it might suggest. To this false shame had Linton brought him, acting on a naturally sensitive nature, by those insidious and imperceptible counsels which represent the world—meaning, thereby, that portion of it who are in the purple and fine linen category—as the last appeal in all cases, not alone of a man's breeding and pretensions, but of his honour and independence.

It was not without many a severe struggle, and many a heartfelt repining, Cashel felt himself surrender the free action of his natural independence to the petty and formal restrictions of a code like this. But there was an innate dread of notoriety, a sensitive shrinking from remark, that made him actually timid about transgressing whatever he was told to be an ordinance of fashion. To dress in a particular way—to frequent certain places—to be known to certain people—to go out at certain hours—and so on, were become to his mind as the actual requirements of his station, and often did he regret the hour when he had parted with his untrammelled freedom to live a life of routine and monotony.

Shrinking, then, from any confidence in Linton, he next thought of Kennyfeck; and, although not placing a high value on his skill and correctness in such a difficulty, he resolved, at all hazards, to consult him on the course to be followed. He had been often told how gladly Government favours the possessor of fortune and influence. Now, thought he, is the time to test the problem. "All of mine is at their service, if they but liberate my poor comrade."

So saying to himself, he had just reached the hall, when the sound of wheels approached the door. A carriage drew up, and Linton, followed by Mr. Hoare, the money-lender, descended.

"Oh, I had entirely forgotten this affair," cried Cashel, as he met them; "can we not fix another day?"

"Impossible, Sir; I leave town to-night."

"Another hour to-day, then?" said Cashel, impatiently.

"This will be very difficult, Sir. I have some very pressing engagements, all of which were formed subject to your convenience in this business."

"But while you are discussing the postponement, you could finish the whole affair," cried Linton, drawing his arm within Cashel's, and leading him along towards the library. "By Jove! it does give a man a sublime idea of wealth, to be sure," said he, laughing, "to see the cool indifference with which you can propose to defer an interview that brings you some fifteen thousand pounds. As for me, I'd make the Viceroy himself play 'ante-chamber,' if little Hoare paid me a visit."

"Well, be it so; only let us despatch," said Cashel, "for I am anxious to catch Kennyfeck before he goes down to Court."

"I'll not detain you many minutes, Sir," said Hoare, drawing forth a very capacious black leather pocket-book and opening it on the table. "There are the bills, drawn as agreed upon—at three and six months—here is a statement of the charges for interest, commission, and——"

"I am quite satisfied it is all right," said Cashel, pushing the paper carelessly from him. "I have borrowed money once or twice in my life, and always thought anything liberal which did not exceed cent. per cent."

"We are content with much less, Sir, as you will perceive," said Hoare, smiling. "Six per cent. interest, one-half commission——"

"Yes, yes—it is all perfectly correct," broke in Cashel. "I sign my name here—and here?"

"And here, also, Sir. There is also a policy of insurance on your life."

"What does that mean?"

"Oh, a usual kind of security in these cases," said Linton; "because if you were to die before the bills came due——"

"I see it all—whatever you please," said Cashel, taking up his hat and gloves. "Now, will you pardon me for taking a very abrupt leave?"

"You are forgetting a very material point, Sir," said Hoare; "this is an order on Frend and Beggan for the money."

"Very true. The fact is, gentlemen, my head is none of the clearest to-day. Good-by—good-by."

"Ten to one all that haste is to keep some appointment with one of Kennyfeck's daughters," said Hoare, as he shook the sand over the freshly-signed bills, when the heavy bang of the hall-door announced Cashel's departure.

"I fancy not," said Linton, musing; "I believe I can guess the secret."

"What am I to do with these, Mr. Linton?" said the other, not heeding the last observation, as he took two pieces of paper from the pocket of his book.

"What are they?" said Linton, stretching at full length on a sofa.

"Two bills, with the endorsement of Thomas Linton."

"Then are two ten-shilling stamps spoiled and good for nothing," replied Linton, "which, without that respectable signature, might have helped to ruin somebody worth ruining."

"One will be due on Saturday, the twelfth. The other——"

"Don't trouble yourself about the dates, Hoare. I'll renew as often as you please—I'll do anything but pay."

"Come, Sir, I'll make a generous proposition: I have made a good morning's work. You shall have them both for a hundred."

"Thanks for the liberality," said Linton, laughing. "You bought them for fifty."

"I know that very well; but remember, you were a very depreciated stock at that time. Now, you are at a premium. I hear you have been a considerable winner from our friend here."

"Then you are misinformed. I have won less than the others—far less than I might have done. The fact is, Hoare, I have been playing a back game—what jockeys call, holding my stride."

"Well, take care you don't wait too long," said Hoare, sententiously.

"How do you mean?" said Linton, sitting up, and showing more animation than he had exhibited before.

"You have your secret—I have mine," replied Hoare, drily, as he replaced the bills in his pocket-book, and clasped it.

"What if we exchange prisoners, Hoare?"

"It would be like most of your compacts, Mr. Linton, all the odds in your own favour."

"I doubt whether any man makes such compacts with *you*," replied Linton; "but why higgle this way? 'Remember,' as *Peacham* says, 'that we could hang one another;' and there is an ugly adage about what happens —when people such as you and I 'fall out.'"

"So there is; and, strange enough, I was just thinking of it. Come, what is *your* secret?"

"Read that," said Linton, placing Enrique's letter in his hand, while he sat down, directly in front, to watch the effect it might produce.

Hoare read slowly and attentively; some passages he re-read three or four times; and then, laying down the letter, he seemed to reflect on its contents.

"You scarcely thought what kind of company our friend used to keep formerly?" asked Linton, sneeringly.

"I knew all about that tolerably well. I was rather puzzling myself a little about this Pedro Rica; that same trick of capturing the slavers, and then selling the slaves, is worthy of one I could mention, not to speak of the double treachery of informing against his comrades, and sending the English frigate after them."

"A deep hand he must be," remarked Linton, coolly.

"A very deep one; but what is Cashel likely to do here?"

"Nothing; he has no clue whatever to the business; the letter itself he had not time to read through, when he dropped it, and——"

"I understand—perfectly. This accounts for his agitation. Well, I must say, *my* secret is the better of the two, and, as usual, you have made a good bargain."

"Not better than *your* morning's work here, Hoare;—confess that."

"Ah, there will not be many more such harvests to reap," said he, sighing.

"How so? his fortune is scarcely breached, as yet."

"He spends money fast," said Hoare, gravely; "even now, see what sums he has squandered—think of the presents he has lavished—diamonds—horses——"

"As to the Kennyfeck affair, it was better than getting into a matrimonial scrape, which I fancy I have rescued him from."

"Oh no, nothing of the kind. Pirate as he is, he wouldn't venture on that."

"Why so—what do you mean?"

"Simply, that he is married already; at least, that species of betrothal which goes for marriage in his free and easy country."

"Married!" exclaimed Linton, in utter amazement; "and he never even hinted in the most distant manner to this."

"And yet the obligation is sufficiently binding, according to Columbian law, to give his widow the benefit of all property he might die possessed of in that Republic."

"And he knows this himself?"

"So well, that he has already proposed a very large sum as forfeit to break the contract."

"And this has been refused?"

"Yes. The girl's father has thought it better to follow your own plan, and make 'a waiting race,' well knowing, that if Cashel does not return to claim her as his wife—or that, which is not improbable, she may marry more advantageously—he will always be ready to pay the forfeit."

"May I learn his name?"

"No!"

"Nor his daughter's?—the Christian name, I mean."

"To what end? It would be a mere idle curiosity, for I should exact a pledge of your never divulging it."

"Of course," said Linton, carelessly. "It was, as you say, a mere idle wish. Was this a love affair, then, for it has a most commercial air?"

"I really don't know that; I fancy that they were both very young, and very ignorant of what they were pledging, and just as indifferent to the consequences."

"She was handsome, this——"

"Maritaña is beautiful, they say," said Hoare, who inadvertently let slip the name he had refused to divulge.

Linton's quick ear caught it at once, but as rapidly affected not to notice it, as he said,

"But I really do not see as yet how this affects what we were just speaking of?"

"It will do so, however—and ere long. These people, who were immensely rich some time back, are now, by one of the convulsions so frequent in those countries, reduced to absolute poverty. They will, doubtless, follow Cashel here, and seek a fulfilment of his contract. I need not tell you, Mr. Linton, what must ensue on such a demand. It would be hard to say whether acceptance or refusal would be worse. In a word, the father-in-law is a man of such a character, there is only one thing would be more ruinous than his enmity, and that is, any alliance with him. Let him but arrive in this country, and every gentleman of station and class will fall back from Cashel's intimacy; and even those—I'll not mention names," said he, smiling—"who could gloss over some of their prejudices with gold-leaf, will soon discover that a shrewder eye than Cashel's will be on them, and that all attempts to profit by his easiness of temper and reckless nature, will be met by one who has never yet been foiled in a game of artifice and deceit."

"Then I perceive we have a very short tether," said Linton, gravely; "when may this worthy gentleman be looked for?"

"At any moment. I believe early in spring, however, will be the time."

"Well, that gives us a few months; during which I must contrive to get in for this borough of Derraheeny——But hark! is that a carriage at the door?—yes, by Jove! The Kennyfecks. I remember, he had asked them to-day to come and see his pictures. I say, Hoare, step out by the back way—we must not be caught together here. I'll make my escape afterwards."

Already the thundering knock of the footman resounded through the house, and Hoare, not losing a moment, left the library, and hastened through the garden at the rear of the house; while Linton, seizing some writing materials, hurried up-stairs, and established himself in a small boudoir off one of the drawing-rooms, carefully letting down the Venetians as he entered, and leaving the chamber but half lighted; this done, he drew a screen in front of him, and waited patiently.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### VISIT TO THE "CASHEL PICTURE GALLERY."

Ignored the schools of France and Spain,
And of the Netherlands not surer,
He knew not Cuyp from Claude Lorraine,
Nor Dow from Albert Durer.

BELL'S IMAGES.

SCARCELY had the Kennyfecks' carriage driven from the door when the stately equipage of the MacFarlines drew up, which was soon after followed by the very small pony phaeton of Mrs. Leicester White, that lady herself driving, and having for her companion a large high-shouldered, spectacled gentleman, whose glances, at once inquiring and critical, pronounced him as one of her numerous *protégés* in art, science, or letters.

This visit to the "Cashel Gallery," as she somewhat grandiloquently designated the collection, had been a thing of her own planning; first, because Mrs. White was an adept in that skilful diplomacy which so happily makes plans for pleasure at other people's houses—and oh, what numbers there are!—delightful, charming people as the world calls them! whose gift goes no further than this, that they keep a registry of their friends' accommodation, and know to a nicety the season to dine here, to sup there, to pic-nic at one place, and to "spend the day"—horrible expression of a more horrible fact—at another. But Mrs. White had also another object in view on the present occasion, which was, to introduce her companion, Mr. Elias Howle, to her Dublin acquaintance.

Mr. Elias Howle was one of a peculiar class, which this age, so fertile in inventions, has engendered, a publisher's man-of-all-work, ready for everything, from statistics to satire, and equally prepared to expound prophecy, or write squibs for "Punch."

Not that lodgings were not inhabited in Grub-street before our day, but that it remained for the glory of this century to see that numerous horde of Tourist authors held in leash by fashionable booksellers, and every now and then let slip over some country, to which plague, pestilence, or famine, had given a newer and more terrible interest. In this novel walk of literature Mr. Howle was one of the chief proficients; he was the creator of that new school of travel which, writing expressly for London readers, refers everything to the standard of "town;" and whether it be a trait of Icelandic life, or some remnant of old world existence in the far East, all must

be brought for trial to the bar of "Seven Dials," or stand to plead in the dock of Pall-mall or Piccadilly. Whatever errors or misconceptions he might fall into respecting his subjects, he made none regarding his readers. He knew them by heart—their leanings, their weakness, and their prejudices; and how pleasantly could he flatter their town-bred self-sufficiency—how slyly insinuate their vast superiority over all other citizens, insidiously assuring them that the Thames at Richmond was infinitely finer than the Rhine or the Danube, and that a trip to Margate was richer in repayal than a visit to the Bosphorus! Ireland was, just at the time we speak of, a splendid field for his peculiar talents. The misery-mongers had had their day. The world was somewhat weary of Landlordism, Pauperism, and Protestantism, and all the other "isms" of that unhappy country.

There was nothing that had not been said over the overgrown Church establishment,—the devouring Middleman,—Cottier misery,—and Celtic barbarism; people grew weary of hearing about a nation so endowed with capabilities, and which yet did nothing, and rather than puzzle their heads any further, they voted Ireland a "bore." It was just then that "this inspired Cockney" determined to try a new phase of the subject, and this was not to counsel nor console, not to lament over nor bewail our varied mass of errors and misfortunes, but to laugh at us. To hunt out as many incongruities—many, real enough, some, fictitious—as he could find; to unveil all that he could discover of social anomaly; and, without any reference to, or any knowledge of, the people, to bring them up for judgment before his less volatile and more happily circumstanced countrymen, certain of the verdict he sought for—a hearty laugh. His mission was to make "Punch" out of Ireland, and none more capable than he for the office.

A word of Mr. Howle in the flesh, and we have done. He was large and heavily built, but neither muscular nor athletic; his frame and all his gestures indicated weakness and uncertainty. His head was capacious, but not remarkable for what phrenologists call moral development, while the sinister expression of his eyes—half submissive, half satirical—suggested doubts of his sincerity. There was nothing honest about him but his mouth; this was large, full, thick-lipped, and sensual; the mouth of one who loved to dine well, and yet felt that his agreeability was an ample receipt in full for the best entertainment that ever graced Blackwall or the "Frères."

It is a heavy infliction that we story-tellers are compelled to lay upon our readers and ourselves, thus to interrupt our narrative by a lengthened description of a character not essentially belonging to our story; we had rather, far rather, been enabled to imitate Mrs. White, as she advanced into the circle in the drawing-room, saying, "Mr. Cashel, allow me to present to

your favourable notice my distinguished friend, Mr. Howle. Lady Janet MacFarline, Mr. Howle"—*sotto*—"the author of 'Snooks in the Holy Land,'—the wittiest thing of the day,—Sir Andrew will be delighted with him,—has been all over the scenes of the Peninsular war.—Mrs. Kennyfeck, Mr. Howle."

Mr. Howle made his round of salutations, and although by his awkwardness tacitly acknowledging that they were palpably more habituated to the world's ways than himself, yet inwardly consoled by remarking certain little traits of manner and accent sufficiently provincial to be treasured up, and become very droll in print or a copper etching.

"It's a vara new pleasure ye are able to confer upon your friends, Mr Cashel," said Sir Andrew, "to show them so fine a collection o' pictures in Ireland, whar, methinks, the arts ha' no enjoyed too mickle encouragement."

"I confess," said Cashel, modestly, "I am but ill qualified to extend the kind of patronage that would be serviceable, had I even the means; I have not the slightest pretension to knowledge or judgment. The few I have purchased have been as articles of furniture, pleasant to look at, without any pretension to high excellence."

"Just as Admiral Dalrymple paid ten pounds for a dunghill when he turned farmer," whispered Mr. Howle in Mrs. White's ear, "and then said, 'he had only bought it because some one said it was a good thing, but that, now, he'd give any man "twenty" to tell him what to do with it.'"

Mrs. White burst into a loud fit of laughter, exclaiming,

"Oh, how clever, how good! Pray, Mr. Howle, tell Lady Janet,—tell Mr. Cashel that."

"Oh, Madam!" cried the terrified tourist, who had not discovered before the very shallow discrimination of his gifted acquaintance.

"If it is so vara good," said Sir Andrew, "we maun insist on hearin' it."

"No, no! nothing of the kind," interposed Howle; "besides, the observation was only intended for Mrs. White's ear."

"Very true," said that lady, affecting a look of consciousness.

"The odious woman," whispered Miss Kennyfeck to her sister; "see how delighted she looks to be compromised."

"If we had Linton," said Cashel, politely offering his arm to Lady Janet, as he led her into the so-called gallery, "he could explain everything for us. We have, however, a kind of catalogue here. This large landscape is said to be by Both."

"If she be a coo," said Sir Andrew, "I maun say it's the first time I ever seen ane wi' the head ower the tail."

"Nonsense," said Lady Janet; "don't ye perceive that the animal is fore-shortened, and is represented looking backwards?"

"I ken nothing aboot that; she may be shortened in the fore-parts, an ye say, and that may be some peculiar breed, but what brings her head ower her rump?"

Sir Andrew was left to finish his criticism alone, the company moving on to a portrait assigned to Vandyck, as Diedrich von Aevenghem, Burgomaster of Antwerp.

"A fine head!" exclaimed Mrs. White, authoritatively; "don't you think so, Mr. Howle?"

"A very choice specimen of the great master, for which, doubtless, you gave a large sum."

"Four hundred, if I remember aright," said Cashel.

"I think he maught hae a clean face for that money," broke in Sir Andrew.

"What do you mean, Sir?" said Miss Kennyfeck, insidiously, and delighted at the misery Lady Janet endured from his remarks.

"Don't ye mind the smut he has on ane cheek?"

"It's the shadow of his nose, Sir Andrew," broke in Lady Janet, with a sharpness of rebuke there was no misunderstanding.

"Eh, my Leddy, so it may, but ye need na bite mine off, for a' that!" And so saying, the discomfited veteran fell back in high dudgeon.

The party now broke into the twos and threes invariable on such occasions, and while Mrs. Kennyfeck and her elder daughter paid their most devoted attentions to Lady Janet, Mrs. White and the author paired off, leaving Olivia Kennyfeck to the guidance of Cashel.

"So you'll positively not tell me what it is that preys on your mind this morning?" said she, in the most insinuating of soft accents.

Cashel shook his head mournfully, and said:

"Why should I tell you of what it is impossible you could give me any counsel in, while your sympathy would only cause uneasiness to yourself?"

"But you forget our compact," said she, archly; "there was to be perfect confidence on both sides, was there not?"

"Certainly. Now, when shall we begin?"

"Have you not begun already?"

"I fancy not. Do you remember two evenings ago, when I came suddenly into the drawing-room and found you pencil in hand, and you, instead of at once showing me what you had been sketching, shut the portfolio, and carried it off, despite all my entreaties—nay, all my just demands?"

"Oh, but," said she, smiling, "confidence is one thing—confession is another."

"Too subtle distinctions for me," cried Cashel. "I foolishly supposed that there was to be an unreserved——"

"Speak lower, for mercy sake!—don't you perceive Lady Janet trying to hear everything you say?" This was said in a soft whisper, while she added aloud, "I think you said it was a Correggio, Mr. Cashel," as they stood before a very lightly-clad Magdalen, who seemed endeavouring to make up for the deficiency of her costume by draping across her bosom the voluptuous masses of her golden hair.

"I think a Correggio," said Cashel, confused at the sudden artifice; "but who has the catalogue?—oh, Sir Andrew; tell us about number fifty-eight."

"Fefty-eight, fefty-eight," mumbled Sir Andrew a number of times to himself, and then, having found the number, he approached the picture and surveyed it attentively.

"Well, Sir, what is it called?" said Olivia.

"It's vara singular," said Sir Andrew, still gazing at the canvas, "but doubtless Correggio knew weel what he was aboot. This," said he, "is a picture of Sain John the Baaptist in a raiment of caamel's hair."

No sense of propriety was proof against this announcement; a laugh, loud and general, burst forth, during which Lady Janet, snatching the book indignantly from his hands, cried,

"You were looking at sixty-eight, Sir Andrew, not fifty-eight; and you have made yourself perfectly ridiculous."

"By my saul, I believe so," muttered the old gentleman, in deep anger "I've been looking at 'saxty-eight' ower long already!"

Fortunately, this sarcasm was not heard by her against whom it was directed, and they who did hear it were fain to suppress their laughter as well as they were able. The party was now increased by the arrival of the Dean and his "ancient," Mr. Softly, to the manifest delight of Mrs. Kennyfeck, who at once exclaimed,

"Ah, we shall now hear something really instructive."

The erudite churchman, after a very abrupt notice of the company, started at speed without losing a moment.

His attention being caught by some curious tableau of the interior of the great Pyramid, he immediately commenced an explanation of the various figures, the costumes and weapons, which he said were all masonic, showing that Pharaoh wore an apron exactly like the Duke of Sussex, and that every emblem of the "aren" was to be found among the great of Ancient Egypt.

While thus employed, Mr. Howle, seated in a corner, was busily sketching the whole party for an illustration to his new book on Ireland, and

once more Cashel and his companion found themselves, of course by the merest accident, standing opposite the same picture in a little boudoir off the large gallery. The subject was a scene from Faust, where Marguerite, leaning on her lover's arm, is walking in a garden by moonlight, and seeking by a mode of divination common in Germany to ascertain his truth, which is by plucking one by one the petals of a flower, saying alternately, "He loves me, he loves me not;" and then, by the result of the last-plucked leaf, deciding which fate is accomplished. Cashel first explained the meaning of the trial, and then taking a rose from one of the flower vases, he said,

"Let me see if you can understand my teaching; you have only to say 'Er liebt mich,' and, 'Er liebt mich nicht.'"

"But how can I?" said she, with a look of beaming innocence, "if there be none who——"

"No matter," said Cashel; "besides, is it not possible you could be loved, and yet never know it? Now for the ordeal."

"Er liebt mich nicht," said Olivia, with a low, silvery voice, as she plucked the first petal off, and threw in on the floor.

"You begin inauspiciously, and, I must say, unfairly, too," said Cashel. "The first augury is in favour of love."

"Er liebt mich," said she, tremulously, and the leaf broke in her fingers. "Ha!" sighed she, "what does that imply? Is it, that he only loves by half his heart?"

"That cannot be," said Cashel; "it is rather that you treated his affection harshly."

"Should it not bear a little?—ought it to give way at once?"

"Nor will it," said he, more earnestly, "if you deal but fairly. Come, I will teach you a still more simple, and yet unerring test."

A heavy sigh from behind the Chinese screen made both the speakers start; and while Olivia, pale with terror, sank into a chair, Cashel hastened to see what had caused the alarm.

"Linton, upon my life!" exclaimed he, in a low whisper, as, on tiptoe, he returned to the place beside her.

"Oh, Mr. Cashel; oh dear, Mr. Cashel——"

"Dearest Olivia——"

"Heigho!" broke in Linton; and Roland and his companion slipped noiselessly from the room, and, unperceived, mixed with the general company, who sat in rapt attention while the Dean explained that Painting was nothing more nor less than an optical delusion—a theory which seemed to delight Mrs. Kennyfeck in the same proportion that it puzzled her. Fortunately, the announcement that luncheon was on the table cut short the

dissertation, and the party descended, all more or less content, to make material enjoyments succeed to intellectual ones.

"Well," whispered Miss Kennyfeck to her sister, as they descended the stairs, "did he?"

An almost inaudible "No" was the reply.

"Your eyes are very red for nothing, my dear," rejoined the elder.

"I dinna ken, Sir," said Sir Andrew to Softly, as he made use of his arm for support—"I dinna ken how ye understand your theory aboot optical delusions, but I maun say, it seems to me a vara strange way for men o' your cloth to pass the mornin' starin' at naked weemen—creatures, too, that if they ever leeved at all, must ha' led the maist abondoned lives. I take it, that Diana herself was ne better than a cuttie; do ye mark hoo she does no scruple to show a bra pair of legs——"

"With respect to the Heathen Mythology," broke in Softly, in a voice he hoped might subbue the discussion——

"Don't tell me aboot the Haythins, Sir; flesh and bluid is a' the same, whatever Kirk it follows."

Before they were seated at table, Linton had joined them, explaining, in the most natural way in the world, that, having sat down to write in the boudoir, he had fallen fast asleep, and was only awakened by Mr. Phillis having accidentally discovered him. A look of quick intelligence passed between Cashel and Olivia at this narrative; the young lady soon appeared to have recovered from her former embarrassment, and the luncheon proceeded pleasantly to all parties. Mr. Howle enjoyed himself to the utmost, not only by the reflection that a hearty luncheon at two would save an hotel dinner at six, but that the Dean and Sir Andrew were two originals, worth five pound apiece even for "Punch." As to Cashel, a glance at the author's note-book would show how he impressed that gifted personage: "'R. C.: —a snob—rich—and gullible; his pictures, all the household gods at Christie's, the Vandyck, late a sign of the Marquis of Granby, at Windsor. Mem.: not over safe to quiz him." "But we'll see later on." "Visit him at his country-seat, 'if poss.'"

"Who is our spectacled friend?" said Linton, as they drove away from the door.

"Some distinguished author, whose name I have forgotten."

"Shrewd looking fellow,—think I have seen him at Ascot. What brings him over here?"

"To write a book, I fancy."

"What a bore. This is the age of detectives, with a vengeance. Well, don't let him in again, that's all. By Jove! it's easier, now-a-days, to escape the Queen's Bench than the *Illustrated News*."

"A note from Mr. Kennyfeck, Sir," said Mr. Phillis, "and the man waits for an answer."

Linton, taking up a book, affected to read, but in reality placed himself so as to watch Cashel's features as he perused the letter, whose size and shape pronounced to be something unusual. Hurriedly mumbling over a rather tedious exordium on the various views the writer had taken of a subject, Cashel's eyes suddenly flashed as he drew forth a small printed paragraph, cut from the column of a newspaper, and which went thus:—"It will be, doubtless, in our readers' recollection how a short time back an armed slaver, sailing under the flag of Columbia, was taken, after a most severe and sanguinary engagement, by H.M. brig *Hornet*. The commander, a young Spaniard of singularly handsome exterior, and with all the bearing and appearance of a rank very different from his mode of life, was carried off and confined in St. Kitt's till such time as he could be brought to trial. Representations from the Government of the Republic were, however, made, and a claim preferred for indemnity, not only for the loss of the vessel and property, but for the loss of life and other injury incurred on the capture. While this singular demand was under investigation, the young Spaniard alluded to contrived to break his bonds and escape: the only mode of doing which was by a leap into the sea from the parapet of the fortress, a height, we are informed, of nigh one hundred feet. They who are acquainted with the locality assert that if he even survived the desperate leap, he must inevitably have fallen a victim to the sharks who frequent the bay to catch the bodies of all who die in the prison, and who, it would appear, are thus unceremoniously disposed of. This supposition would seem, however, in some respect, contradicted, by the circumstance that a Venezuelan cruiser, which hung about the shore for the two preceding days, sailed on the very night of his escape, and, in all probability, with him on board."

"I could swear he is safe!" cried Cashel, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm; "he's a glorious fellow."

"Who is that?" said Linton, looking up; "any one I know?"

"No, indeed!" said Cashel. Then suddenly checking himself in a speech whose opening accents were far from flattering, he added, "One you never even heard of."

He once more addressed himself to the letter, which, however, merely contained some not very brilliant commentaries of Mr. Kennyfeck over the preceding extract, and which, after enumerating a great many modes of investigating the event, concluded with the only thing like common sense in the whole, by recommending a strict silence and secrecy about it all.

Cashel was closing the epistle, when he caught on the turn-down the following lines:

"Mr. Linton has written to me about something like a legal transfer of the cottage and lands of Tubber-beg, which he mentions your having presented to him. What reply am I to return to this? I stated that you had already assured Mr. Corrigan, the present tenant, of an undisturbed possession of the tenure, but Mr. L. interrupted my explanation by saying that he only desired an assignment of the property, such as would give a Parliamentary qualification, and that all pledges made to Mr. C. he would regard as equally binding on himself."

Cashel's first impulse, when he had read thus far, was to show Linton the paragraph, and frankly ask him what he wished to be done; indeed, he had already advanced towards him with that object, when he checked himself. "It might seem ungracious to ask any explanation. There had been already a moment of awkwardness about that same cottage, and Linton had behaved so well; and, of course, only asking him for the possession as a means of qualifying, Corrigan need never hear of it. Besides, he could make Linton a present of much greater real value as soon as the circumstances of the estate became better known." Such and such-like reasonings passed hastily through his brain; and as all his resolves were quickly formed, and as quickly acted on, he sat down and wrote:

"Dear Mr. Kennyfeck,—Many thanks for the information of your note, which has served to allay all my anxiety for a valued friend. As to Linton, you will have the goodness to satisfy him in every particular, and make all and every legal title he desires to the cottage and grounds of Tubber-beg. Although he is now at my side while I write, I have not alluded to the subject, feeling the awkwardness of touching on a theme so delicate. Say, however, for me, that Corrigan is not to be disturbed, nor any pledge I have made towards him—no matter how liberally construed by him—to be, in any respect, infringed.—Yours, in great haste,

"R. C."

"Why you are quite a man of business to-day, Cashel, with your correspondence and letter-writing; and I'm sorry for it, for I wanted to have a bit of serious talk with you—that is, if it do not bore you."

"Not in the least. I was, I own it, nervous and uneasy this morning; now, however, my mind is at ease, and I am quite ready for anything."

"Well, then, without preamble, are you still of the same mind about Parliament, because the time is hastening on when you ought to come to some decision on the matter?"

"I have never bestowed a thought on the matter since," said Cashel. "The truth is, when I hear people talk politics in society, I am only asto-

nished at their seeming bigotry and one-sidedness; and when I read newspapers of opposite opinions, I am equally confounded at the excellent arguments they display for diametrically contradictory lines of action, so that my political education makes but little progress."

"What you say is perfectly just," said Linton, appearing to reflect profoundly. "A man of real independence—not the mere independence of fortune, but the far higher independence of personal character—has much to endure in our tangled and complex system of legislation. As for yourself, for instance, who can afford to despise patronage, who have neither sons to advance in the Navy, nor nephews in the Foreign Office, who neither want the Bath nor a Baronetcy, who would be as sick of the flatteries as you would be disgusted with the servility of party—why you should submit to the dust and heat, the turmoil and fatigue of a session, I can't think. And how you would be bored—bored by the ceaseless reiterations night after night, the same arguments growing gradually weaker as the echo grew fainter; bored by the bits of 'Horace' got off by heart to wind up with; bored by the bad jests of witty members; bored by Peel's candour, and Palmerston's petulance; by Cobden's unblushing effrontery, and Hume's tiresome placidity. You'd never know a happy day nor a joyous hour till you accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and cut them all. No; the better course for you would be, choose a nominee for your borough; select a man in whom you have confidence. Think of some one over whom your influence would be complete, who would have no other aim than in following out your suggestions; some one, in fact, who unites sufficient ability with personal friendship. What d'ye think of Kennyfeck?"

"Poor Kennyfeck," said Cashel, laughing, "he'd never think of such a thing."

"I don't know," said Linton, musing; "it might not suit him, but his wife would like it prodigiously."

"Shall I propose it, then?" said Cashel.

"Better not, perhaps," said Linton, appearing to reflect; "his income, which is a right good one, is professional. This, of course, he'd forfeit by accepting a seat in the House. Besides, really, the poor man would make no way. No, we must think of some one else. Do you like White?"

"Leicester White? I detest the man, and the wife too."

"Well, there's Frobisher, a fellow of good name and family. I'd not go bail for his preferring your interests to his own, but as times go, you might chance upon worse. Will you have Frobisher?"

"I have no objection," said Cashel, carelessly; "would he like it himself?"

"Would he like anything that might help him to a step in the regiment,

or place him in a position to sell himself, you, and the borough constituency, to the highest bidder?" said Linton, irritated at Cashel's half assent.

"Well, if these be his principles," cried Cashel, laughing, "I think we'd better put him aside."

"You're right; he'd never do," said Linton, recovering all his self-possession; "what you want, is a man sufficiently unconnected with ties of family or party, to see in you his patron and his object, and who, with cleverness enough to enunciate the views you desire to see prevail, has also the strong bond of personal regard to make him always even more the friend than the follower."

"I only know of one man who realises all this combination," said Cashel, smiling, "and *he* wouldn't answer."

"Who is he,—and why?" asked Linton, in vain endeavouring to look easy and unconcerned.

"Tom Linton is the man, and his invincible laziness the 'why.' Isn't that true?"

"By George, Cashel, if you're content with the first part of the assertion, I'll pledge myself to remedy the latter. I own, frankly, it is a career for which I have no predilection; if I had, I should have been 'in' many years ago. I have all my life held very cheap your great Political leaders, both as regards capacity and character, and I have ever fancied that I should have had some success in the lists; but I have always loved ease, and that best of ease, independence. If you think, however, that I can worthily represent you in Parliament, and that you could safely trust to my discretion the knotty question of Political war, say the word, my boy, and I'll fling my 'far niente' habits to the wind, and you shall have all the merit of developing the promising member for——what's the name of it?"

"Derraheeny."

"Exactly,—the honourable and learned—for Derraheeny. I rather like the title."

"Well, Linton, if you are really serious——"

"Most assuredly, serious; and more, to prove it, I shall ask you to clench our bargain at once. It is not enough that you make me your nominee, but you must also render me eligible to become so."

"I don't clearly comprehend——"

"I'll enlighten you. Our venerable Constitution, perfectly irrespective of the Tom Lintons of this world,—a race which, by the way, never dies out, probably because they have avoided intermarriage,—has decided that a man must possess something besides his wits to be qualified as 'Member of Parliament;' a strange law, because the aforesaid wits are all that the Honourable House has any reason to lay claim to This same something

which guarantees that a man has a legislative capacity, amounts to some nundreds a year. Don't be impatient, and come out with any piece of rash generosity; I don't want you to make a present of an estate—only to lend me one! To be qualified, either as a candidate for the House or a Gentleman rider, one only needs a friend,—a well-to-do friend,—who'll say, 'He's all right.'"

"I'm quite ready to vouch for you, Tom, but you'll have to take the affair into your own management."

"Oh, it's easy enough. That same cottage and the farm which we spoke of the other day, Kennyfeck can make out a kind of conveyance, or whatever the instrument is called, by which it acknowledges me for its owner, vice Roland Cashel, Esquire. This, properly sealed, signed, and so on, will defy the most searching Committee that ever pried into any gentleman's private circumstances."

"Then explain it all to Kennyfeck, and say that I wish it done at once."

"Nay, Cashel, pardon me. My ugliest enemy will not call me punctilious, but I must stand upon a bit of ceremony here. This must be ordered by yourself. You are doing a gracious thing—a devilish kind thing—it must not be done by halves. Were I to communicate this to Kennyfeck, he'll unquestionably obey the direction, but most certainly he'd say, to the first man he met, 'See how Linton has managed to trick Cashel out of a very considerable slice of landed property.' He'd not take much trouble to state the nature of our compact; he'd rather blink the whole arrangement altogether, and make the thing seem a direct gift. Now, I have too much pride on your account, and my own too, to stand this."

"Well, well, it shall be as you like; only I trow I disagree with you about old Kennyfeck: he's a fine straight-hearted fellow—he's——"

"He's an attorney, Cashel. These fellows can no more comprehend a transfer of property without a trial at bar, or a suit in Equity, than an Irish second can understand a falling out without one of the parties being brought home on a door. Besides, he has rather a grudge against me. I never told you—indeed, I never meant to tell you—but I can have no secrets from you. You know the youngest girl, Olivia?"

"Yes, go on," said Cashel, red and pale by turns.

"Well, I flirted a good deal last winter with her. Upon my life, I did not intend it to have gone so far; I suppose it must have gone far, though, because she became desperately in love. She is very pretty, certainly, and a really good little girl—mais, que voulez-vous? If I tie a fly on my hook I can't afford to see a flounder or a perch walk off with it—its the speckled monster of the stream I fish for. They ought to have known that them-

selves,—I've no doubt they did, too; but they were determined, as they say here, to die 'innocent,' and so one fine morning I was just going to join the hounds at Finglas, when old Kennyfeck, very trimly dressed and looking unutterable importance, entered my lodgings. There's a formula for these kind of explanations—I've gone through seven of these myself, and I'll swear that every papa has opened the conference with a solemn appeal to Heaven 'that he never was aware of the attentions shown his daughter, nor the state of his dear child's affections, till last evening.' They always assure you, besides, that if they could give a million and a half as dowry, you are the very man—the actual one individual—they would have selected; so that on an average most young ladies have met with at least half a dozen parties whom the fathers have pronounced to be, separately, the one most valued. Kennyfeck behaved, I must say, admirably. His wife would have a Galway cousin sent for, and a duel; some other kind friend suggested to have me waylaid and thrashed. He calmly heard me for about ten minutes, and then taking up his hat and gloves, said, 'Take your rule,' and so it ended. I dined there the next Sunday—yes, that's part of my system: I never permit people to nourish small grudges, and go about abusing me to my acquaintances. If they *will* do that, I overwhelm them by their duplicity, as I am seen constantly in their intimacy, and remarkable for always speaking well of them, so that the world will certainly give it against them. The gist of all this tiresome story is, that Kennyfeck and the ladies would, if occasion served, pay off the old debt to me; therefore, beware if you hear me canvassed in that quarter!"

Linton, like many other cunning people, very often lapsed into little confessions of the tactics by which he played his game in the world, and although Cashel was not by any means a dangerous confidant to such disclosures, he now marked with feelings not all akin to satisfaction this acknowledgment of his friend's skill.

"You'd never have shown your face there again, I'll wager a hundred!" said Linton, reading in the black look of Roland's countenance an expression he did not fancy.

"You are right. I should have deemed it unfair to impose on the young lady a part so full of awkwardness as every meeting must necessitate."

"That comes of your innocence about women, my dear friend. They have face for anything. It is not hypocrisy, it is not that they do not feel, and feel deeply, but their sense of command, their instinct of what is becoming, is a thousand times finer than ours; and I am certain that when we take all manner of care to, what is called, spare their feelings, we are

in reality only sparing them a cherished opportunity of exercising a control over those feelings which we foolishly suppose to be as ungovernable as our own."

Either not agreeing with the sentiment, or unable to cope with its subtlety, Cashel sat some time without speaking. From Olivia Kennyfeck his thoughts reverted to one in every respect unlike her—the daring, impetuous Maritaña. He wondered within himself whether *her* bold, impassioned nature could be comprehended within Linton's category, and a secret sense of rejoicing thrilled through him as he replied to himself in the negative.

"I'd wager a trifle, Roland, from that easy smile you wear, that your memory has called up one example, at least, unfavourable to my theory. Eh! I have guessed aright. Come then, out with it, man—who is this peerless paragon of pure ingenuous truth?—who is she whose nature is the transparent crystal where fair thoughts are enshrined? No denizen of our misty northland, I'll be sworn, but some fair Mexican, with as little disguise as drapery. Confess, I say—there is a confession, I'll be sworn—and so make a clean breast of it."

It struck Cashel, while Linton was speaking, how effectually Maritaña herself, by one proud look, one haughty gesture, would have silenced such flippant raillery; and he could not help feeling it a kind of treason to their old friendship that he should listen to it in patient endurance.

"Listen to me, amigo mio," said he, in a tone of earnest passion, that seemed almost estranged from his nature latterly—"listen to me, while I tell you that in those far-away countries, whose people you regard with such contemptuous pity, there are women—ay, young girls—whose daring spirit would shame the courage of many of those fine gentlemen we spend our lives with; and I, for one, have so much of the Indian in me, as to think that courage is the first of virtues."

"I cannot help fancying," said Linton, with an almost imperceptible raillery, "that there are other qualities would please me as well in a wife or a mistress."

"I have no doubt of it,—and suit you better, too," said Cashel, savagely; then hastily correcting himself for his rude speech, he added, "I believe, in good earnest, that you would as little sympathise with that land and its people, as I do with this. Ay, if you want a confession, there's one for you. I'm longing to be back once more among the vast prairies of the West, galloping free after the dark-backed bisons, and strolling along in the silent forests. The enervation of this life wearies and depresses me,—worse than all, I feel that, with a little more of it, I shall lose all energy and zest for that activity of body, which, to men like myself, supplies the

place of thought,—a little more of it, and I shall sink into that languid routine where dissipation supplies the only excitement."

"This is a mere passing caprice; a man who has wealth——"

"There it is," cried Cashel, interrupting him impetuously; "that is the eternal burden of your song. As if wealth, in forestalling the necessity for labour, did not, at the same time, deprive life of all the zeal of enterprise. When I have stepped into my boat to board a Chilian frigate, I have had a prouder throbbing at my heart than ever the sight of that banker's cheque book has given me. There's many a Gambusino in the Rocky Mountains a happier—ay, and a finer fellow, too, than the gayest of those gallants that ever squandered the gold *he* quarried! But why go on?—we are speaking in unknown tongues to each other."

The tone of irritation into which, as it seems unconsciously, Cashel had fallen, was not lost on the keen perception of Linton, and he was not sorry to feign a pretext for closing an interview whose continuance might be unpleasant.

"I was thinking of a hurried trip down to Tubbermore," said he, rising; "we shall have these guests of yours in open rebellion, if we don't affect at least something like preparation for their reception. I'll take Perystell along with me, and we'll see what can be done to get the old house in trim."

"Thanks," said Cashel, as he walked up and down, his thoughts seeming engaged on some other theme.

"I'll write to you a report of the actual condition of the fortress," said Linton, assuming all his habitual easy freedom of manner, "and then, if you think of anything to suggest, you'll let me hear."

"Yes, I'll write," said Cashel, still musing on his own thoughts.

"I see pretty plainly," cried Linton, laughing, "there is no earthly use in asking you questions just now, your brain being otherwise occupied, and so, good-by."

"Good-by—good-by," said Cashel, endeavouring, but not with a very good grace, to shake off his preoccupation while he shook hands with him; and Linton descended the stairs, humming an opera air, with all the seeming light-heartedness of a very careless nature.

Cashel, meanwhile, sat down, and, with his head resting on his hand, pondered over their late interview. There were two circumstances which both puzzled and distressed him. How came it that Linton should have written this note to Kennyfeck on a subject which only seemed to have actually suggested itself in the course of this their very last conversation? Had he already planned the whole campaign respecting the seat in Parliament and the qualification, and was his apparently chance allusion to those

topics a thing studied and devised beforehand? This, if true, would argue very ill for his friend's candour and fair dealing; and yet, how explain it otherwise? Was there any other seat open to him for which to need a qualification? If so, he had never spoken of it. It was the first time in his life that Cashel had conceived a suspicion of one whom he had regarded in the light of friend, and only they who have undergone a similar trial can understand the poignant suffering of the feeling; and yet, palpable as the cause for such a doubt was, he had never entertained it had not Linton spoken disparagingly of the Kennyfecks! This is a curious trait of human nature, but one worth consideration; and while leaving it to the elucidation the penetration of each reader may suggest, we only reiterate the fact, that while Cashel could, without an effort, have forgiven the duplicity practised on himself, the levity Linton employed respecting Olivia engendered doubts of his honour too grave to be easily combated.

As for Linton, scarcely had he quitted Cashel, than he hastened to call on Kennyfeck; he had written the note already alluded to, to leave at the house should the solicitor be from home; but having left it, by accident, on his writing-table, his servant, discovering it to be sealed and addressed, had, without further question, left it at Kennyfeck's house. As Linton went along, he searched his pockets for the epistle, but consoled himself by remembering how he had left it at home.

A few moments later found him at Kennyfeck's door. The attorney was at home, and, without any announcement, Linton entered the study where he sat.

"I was this instant writing to you, Sir," said Kennyfeck, rising, and placing a seat for him; "Mr. Cashel, on being informed of the wish expressed in your note——"

"Of what note?" said Linton, in a voice of, for him, very unusual agitation.

"This note—here, Sir—dated—no, by-the-by, it is not dated, but brought by your servant two hours ago."

Linton took the paper, glanced his eye over it, and then, in mingled chagrin and forgetfulness, tore it, and threw the fragments into the fire.

"There is some mistake about this," said he, slowly, and giving himself time to consider what turn he should lend it.

"This is Mr. Cashel's reply, Sir," said Kennyfeck, after pausing some moments, but in vain, for the explanation.

Linton eagerly caught the letter and read it through, and whatever scruples or fear he might have conceived from any other man's, it seemed as if he had little dread of Cashel's penetration, for his assured and easy smile at once showed that he had regained his wonted tranquillity.

"You will then take the necessary steps, without delay, Kennyfeck," said he. "The elections cannot be very distant, and it is better to be prepared." As he spoke, he threw the letter back upon the table, but in a moment afterwards, while taking off his gloves, managed to seize it and convey it to his pocket. "You know far better than I do, Kennyfeck," resumed he, "how sharp the lawyers can be in picking out any flaw respecting title and so forth; for this reason, be careful that this document shall be as regular and binding as need be."

"It shall be submitted for counsel's opinion this evening, Sir——"

"Not to Jones, then; I don't fancy that gentleman, although I know he has some of your confidence; send it to Hammond."

"As you please, Sir."

"Another point. You'll not insert any clause respecting the tenant in possession; it would only be hampering us with another defence against some legal subtlety or other."

"Mr. Cashel does not desire this, Sir."

"Of course not,—you understand what the whole thing means. Well, I must say good-by; you'll have all ready by the time I return to town. My respects to the drawing-room. Adieu."

"That was a bad blunder about the note," muttered Linton, as he walked along towards home, "and might have lost the game, if the antagonist had any skill whatever."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### LINTON VISITS HIS ESTATE.

Let's see the field, and mark it well,
For, here, will be the battle

OTTOCAR.

"Does this path lead to the house, friend?" said a gentleman, whose dress bespoke recent travel, to the haggard, discontented figure of a man, who, seated on a stone beside a low and broken wicket, was lazily filling his pipe, and occasionally throwing stealthy glances at the stranger. A short nod of the head was the reply. "You belong to the place, I suppose?"

"Maybe I do; and what then?"

"Simply that, as I am desirous of going thither, I should be glad of your showing me the way."

"Troth, an' there's little to see when you get there," rejoined the other sarcastically. "What are you by trade, if it's not displeasin' to ye?"

"That's the very question I was about to ask you," said Linton, for it was himself; "you appear to have a very easy mode of life, whatever it be, since you are so indifferent about earning half-a-crown."

Tom Keane arose from his seat, and made an awkward attempt at saluting, as he said,

"'Tis the dusk o the evening prevented me seeing yer Honer, or I wouldn't be so bowld. This is the way to the Hall, sure enough."

"This place has been greatly neglected of late," said Linton, as they walked along side by side, and endeavouring, by a tone of familiarity, to set his companion at ease.

"Troth, it is neglected, and always was as long as I remember. I was reared in it, and I never knew it other; thistles and docks as big as your leg, everywhere, and the grass choked up with moss."

"How came it to be so completely left to ruin?"

"Anan!" muttered he, as if not well comprehending the question, but, in reality, a mere device employed to give him more time to scan the stranger, and guess at his probable object.

"I was asking," said Linton, "how it happened that a fine old place like this was suffered to go to wreck and ruin?"

"Faix, it's ould enough, anyhow," said the other, with a coarse laugh.

"And large too."

"Yer Honer was here afore?" said Tom, stealthily glancing at him under his brows. "I'm thinking I remember yer Honer's faytures. You wouldn't be the gentleman that came down with Mr. Duffy?"

"No; this is my first visit to these parts; now, where does this little road lead? It seems to be better cared for than the rest, and the gate, too, is neatly kept."

"That goes down to the cottage, sir,—Tubber-beg, as they call it. Yer Honer isn't Mr. Cashel himself?" said Tom, reverentially taking off his tattered hat, and attempting an air of courtesy, which sat marvellously ill upon him.

"I have not that good luck, my friend."

"'Tis good luck ye may call it," sighed Tom,—"a good luck that doesn't fall to many; but, maybe, ye don't want it; maybe, yer Honer——"

"And who lives in the cottage of Tubber-beg?" said Linton, interrupting.

"One Corrigan, Sir; an ould man and his granddaughter."

"Good kind of people, are they?"

"Ayeh! there's worse, and there's betther! They're as proud as Lucifer, and poor as naygurs."

"And this is the Hall itself?" exclaimed Linton, as he stopped directly in front of the old dilapidated building, whose deformities were only exaggerated by the patchy effect of a faint moonlight.

"Ay, there it is," grinned Tom, "and no beauty either; and ugly as it looks without, it's worse within! There's cracks in the walls ye could put your hand through, and the windows is rotten, where they stand."

"It is not very tempting, certainly, as a residence," said Linton, smiling

"Ah, but if ye heerd the cats, the way they do be racin' and huntin' each other at night, and the wind bellowsin' down the chimbleys, such screechin' and yellin' as it keeps, and then, the slates rattlin', till ye'd think the ould roof was comin' off altogether—be my soul, there's many a man wouldn't take the property and sleep a night in that house."

"One would do a great deal, notwithstanding, for a fine estate like this," said Linton, dryly.

There was something, either in the words or the accent, that touched Tom Keane's sympathy for the speaker; some strange suspicion, perhaps, that he was one, whose fortune, like his own, was not beyond the casualties and chances of life, and it was with a species of coarse friendship that he said, "Ah, if we had it between us, we'd do well."

"Right well,—no need to ask for better," said Linton, with a heartiness of assent that made the other perfectly at ease. "I'm curious to have a look at the inside of the place; I suppose there is no hindrance?"

"None in life! I live below, and, faix, there's no living anywhere else, for most of the stairs is burned, and, as I towld ye, the rats has up-stairs all to themselves. Nancy, give us a light," cried he, passing into the dark and spacious hall, "I'm going to show a gentleman the curiosities. I ax your Honer's pardon, the place isn't so clean as it might be."

Linton gave one peep into the long and gloomy chamber, where the whole family were huddled together in all the wretchedness and disorder of a cabin, and at once drew back.

"The cows is on the other side," said the man, "and, beyond, there's four rooms was never plastered; and there, where you see the straw, that's the billiard-room, and inside of it again, there's a place for play-actin', and, more by token, there's a quare thing there."

"What's that?" asked Linton, whose curiosity was excited by the remark.

"Come, and I'll show yer Honer."

So saying, he led on through a narrow corridor, and, passing through two or three dilapidated, ruined chambers, they entered a large and spacious

apartment, whose sloping floor at once showed Linton that they were standing on the stage of a theatre.

Tom Keane held up the flickering light, that the other might see the torn and tattered remnants of the decorations, and the fragments of scenes, as they flapped to and fro. "It's a dhroll place, anyhow," said he, "and there's scarce a bit of it hasn't a trap-door, or some other contrivance of the like; but here's one stranger than all; this is what I towld yer Honer about." He walked, as he spoke, to the back wall of the building, where, on the surface of the plaster, a rude scene, representing a wood, was painted, at one side of which a massive pile of rock, overgrown with creepers, stood. "Now, ye'd never guess what was there," said Tom, holding the candle in different situations to exhibit the scene; "and, indeed, I found it by chance myself; see this,"—and he pressed a small but scarcely perceptible knob of brass in the wall, and at once, what appeared to be the surface of the rock, slid back, discovering a dark space behind. "Come on, now, after me," continued he. Linton followed, and they ascended a narrow stair constructed in the substance of the wall, and barely sufficient to admit one person.

Arriving at the top, after a few seconds' delay, Tom opened a small door, and they stood in a large and well-proportioned room, where some wormeaten bed furniture yet remained. The door had been once, as a small fragment of glass showed, the frame of a large mirror, and must have been quite beyond the reach of ordinary powers of detection.

"That was a cunning way to steal down among the play acthers," said Keane, grinning, while Linton, with the greatest attention, remarked the position of the door and its secret fastening.

"I suppose no one but yourself knows of this stair?" said Linton.

"Sorra one, Sir, except, maybe, some of the smugglers that used to come here long ago from the mouth of the Shannon. This was one of their hiding-places."

"Well, if this old mansion comes ever to be inhabited, one might have rare fun by means of that passage; so be sure you keep the secret well. Let that be a padlock on your lips." And, so saying, he took a sovereign from his purse and gave it him. "Your name is——"

"Tom, yer Honer—Tom Keane; and, by this and by that, I'm ready to do yer Honer's bidding from this hour out——"

"Well, we shall be good friends, I see," interrupted Linton; "you may, perhaps, be useful to me, and I can also be able to serve you. Now, which is the regular entrance to this chamber?"

"There, Sir; it's the last door as ye see in the long passage. Them is all bedrooms along there, but it's not safe to walk down, for the floor is rotten."

Linton noted down in a memory far from defective the circumstances of the chamber, and then followed his guide through the remainder of the house, which in every quarter presented the same picture of ruin and decay.

"The bit of candle is near out," said Tom, "but sure there isn't much more to be seen; there's rooms there was never opened, and more, on the other side, the same. The place is as big as a barrack, and here we are once more on the grand stair."

For once, the name was not ill applied, as, constructed of Portland stone, and railed with massive banisters of iron, it presented features of solidity and endurance, in marked contrast to the other portions of the edifice. Linton cast one more glance around the gloomy entrance, and sallied forth into the free air. "I'll see you to-morrow, Tom," said he, "and we'll have some talk together. Good night."

"Good night, and good luck to yer Honer; but won't you let me see your Honer out of the grounds—as far as the big gate, at least?"

"Thanks; I know the road perfectly already, and I rather like a lonely stroll of a fine night like this."

Tom, accordingly, reiterated his good wishes, and Linton was suffered to pursue his way unaccompanied. Increasing his speed as he arrived at a turn of the road, he took the path which led off the main approach, and led down by the river-side to the cottage of Tubber-beg. There was a feeling of strong interest which prompted him to see this cottage, which now he might call his own; and as he went, he regarded the little clumps of ornamental planting, the well-kept walks, the neat palings, the quaint benches beneath the trees, with very different feelings from those he had bestowed on the last-visited scene. Nor was he insensible to the landscape beauty which certain vistas opened, and, seen even by the faint light of a new moon, were still rich promises of picturesque situation.

Suddenly, and without any anticipation, he found himself, on turning a little copse of evergreens, in front of the cottage, and almost beneath the shadow of its deep porch. Whatever his previous feelings of self-interest in every detail around, they were speedily routed by the scene before him.

In a large and well-furnished drawing-room, where a single lamp was shining, sat an old man in an easy-chair, his features, his attitude, and his whole bearing indicating the traces of recent illness. Beside him, on a low stool, almost at his feet, was a young girl of singular beauty—the plastic grace of her figure, the easy motion of the head, as from time to time she raised it to throw upwards a look of affectionate reverence, and the long, loose masses of her hair, which, accidentally unfastened, fell on either shoulder, making rather one of those ideals which a Raphael can conceive

than a mere creature of every-day existence. Although late autumn, the windows lay open to the ground, for, as yet, no touch of coming winter had visited this secluded and favoured spot. In the still quiet of the night, *her* voice, for she alone spoke, could be heard; at first, the mere murmur of the accents reached Linton's ears, but even from them he could gather the tone of cheering and encouragement in which she spoke. At length he heard her say, in a voice of almost tremulous enthusiasm, "It was so like you, dear papa, not to tell this Mr. Cashel that you had yourself a claim, and, as many think, a rightful one, to this same estate, and thus not trouble the stream of his munificence."

"Nay, child, it had been as impolitic as unworthy to do so," said the old man; "he who stoops to receive a favour should detract nothing from the generous sentiment of the granter."

"For my part, I would tell him," said she, eagerly, "that his noble conduct has for ever barred my prosecuting such a claim, and that if, to-morrow, the fairest proofs of my right should reach me, I'd throw them in the fire."

"To get credit for such self-sacrifice, Mary, one must be independent of all hypothesis; one must do, and not merely promise. Now, it would be hard to expect Mr. Cashel to feel the same conviction I do, that this confiscation was repealed by letters under the hand of Majesty itself. The Brownes, through whom Cashel inherits, were the stewards of my ancestors, entrusted with all their secret affairs, and cognisant of all their family matters. From the humble position of dependents, they suddenly sprang into wealth and fortune, and ended by purchasing the very estate they once lived on as day-labourers—sold as it was, like all confiscated estates, for a mere fraction of its value."

"Oh, base ingratitude!"

"Worse still; it is said, and with great reason to believe it true, that Hammond Browne, who was sent over to London by my great-grandfather to negotiate with the Government, actually received the free pardon and the release of the confiscation, but concealed and made away with both, and, to prevent my grandfather being driven to further pursuit, gave him the lease of this cottage on the low terms we continue to hold it."

A low, faint cough from the old man warned his granddaughter of the dangers of the night air, and she arose and closed the windows. They still continued their conversation, but Linton, unable to hear more, returned to his inn, deeply reflecting over the strange disclosures he had overheard.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### BREAKFAST WITH MR. CORRIGAN.

How cold is treachery.

PLAY.

"WHO can Mr. Linton be, my dear?" said old Mr. Corrigan, as he sat at breakfast the next day, and pondered over the card which, with a polite request for an interview, the servant had just delivered. "I cannot remember the name, if I ever heard it before; but should we not invite him to join us at breakfast?"

"Where is he, Simon?" asked Miss Leicester.

"At the door, Miss, and a very nice-looking gentleman as ever I saw."

"Say that I have been ill, Simon, and cannot walk to the door, and beg he'll be kind enough to come in to breakfast."

With a manner where ease and deference were admirably blended, Linton entered the room, and, apologising for his intrusion, said, "I have come down here, Sir, on a little business matter for my friend Roland Cashel, and I could not think of returning to town without making the acquaintance of one for whom my friend has already conceived the strongest feeling of interest and regard. It will be the first question I shall hear when I get back, 'Well, what of Mr. Corrigan, and how is he?'"

While making this speech, which he delivered in a tone of perfect frankness, he seemed never to have noticed the presence of Miss Leicester, who had retired a little as he entered the room, and now, on being introduced to her, made his acknowledgments with a grave courtesy.

"And so our young landlord is thinking of taking up his residence amongst us?" said Corrigan, as Linton assumed his place at the breakfast-table.

"For a few weeks he purposes to do so, but I question greatly if the tranquil pleasures and homely duties of a country life will continue long to attract him; he is very young, and the world so new to him, that he will scarcely settle down anywhere, or to anything, for some time to come."

"Experience is a capital thing, no doubt, Mr. Linton, but I'd rather trust the generous impulses of a good-hearted youth in a country like this, long neglected by its gentry. Let him once take an interest in the place and the people, and I'll vouch for the rest. Is he a sportsman?"

"He *was*, when in Mexico; but buffalo and antelope hunting are very different from what this country offers."

"Does he read?—is he studious?" said Mary.

"Not even a newspaper, Miss Leicester. He is a fine, high-spirited, dashing fellow, and if good-nature and honourable intentions could compensate for defective education and training, he would be perfect."

"They'll go very far, depend on it, Mr. Linton. In these days, a man of wealth can buy almost anything. Good sense, judgment, skill, are all in the market; but a generous nature and a warm heart are God's gifts, and can neither be grafted nor transplanted."

"You'll like him, I'm certain, Mr. Corrigan."

"I know I shall. I have reason for the anticipation; Tiernay told me the handsome words he used when according me a favour,—and here comes the Doctor himself." As he spoke, Dr. Tiernay entered the room, his flushed face and hurried breathing bespeaking a hasty walk. "Good morrow, Tiernay. Mr. Linton, let me present our doctor; not the least among our local advantages, as you can tell your friend Mr. Cashel."

"We've met before, Sir," said Tiernay, scanning, with a steady gaze, the countenance which, wreathed in smiles, seemed to invite rather than dread recognition.

"I am happy to be remembered, Dr. Tiernay," said Linton, "although I fancy our meeting was too brief for much acquaintance; but we'll know each other better, I trust, hereafter."

"No need, Sir," whispered Tiernay, as he passed close to his side; "I believe we read each other perfectly already."

Linton smiled, and bowed, as though accepting the speech in some complimentary sense, and turned towards Miss Leicester, who was busily arranging some dried plants in a volume.

"These are not specimens of this neighbourhood?" said Linton, taking up some heaths, "which are seldom found save in Alpine regions."

"Yes, Sir," interrupted Tiernay, "you'll be surprised to find here productions which would not seem native to these wilds."

"If you take an interest in such things," said old Corrigan, "you can't have a better guide than my granddaughter and Tiernay; they know every crag and glen for twenty miles round; all I bargain for is, don't be late back for dinner. You'll give us your company, I hope, Sir, at six?"

Linton assented, with a cordial pleasure that delighted his invitor; and Mary, so happy to see the gratified expression of her grandfather's face, looked gratefully at the stranger for his polite compliance.

"A word with you, Sir," whispered Tiernay in Linton's ear; and he passed out into the little flower-garden, saying, as he went, "I'll show Mr.

Linton the grounds, Miss Mary, and you shall not have to neglect your household cares."

Linton followed him without speaking, nor was a word interchanged between them till they had left the cottage a considerable distance behind them. "Well, Sir," said Linton, coming to a halt, and speaking in a voice of cold and steadfast purpose, "how far do you propose that I am to bear you company?"

"Only till we are beyond the danger of being overheard," said Tiernay, turning round. "Here will do perfectly. You will doubtless say, Sir, that in asking you for an explanation of why I see you in this cottage, that I am exceeding the bounds of what right and duty alone impose."

"You anticipate me precisely," said Linton, sarcastically, "and to save you the embarrassment of so obviously impertinent a proceeding, I beg to say that I shall neither afford you the slightest satisfaction on this or any other subject of inquiry. Now, Sir, what next?"

"Do you forget the occasion of our first meeting?" said the Doctor, who actually was abashed beneath the practised effrontery of his adversary.

"Not in the least, Sir. You permitted yourself on that occasion to take a liberty, which from your age and other circumstances I consented to pass unnoticed. I shall not always vouch for the same patient endurance on my part; and so pray be cautious how you provoke it."

"It was at that meeting," said the Doctor, with passionate earnestness, "that I heard you endeavour to dissuade your friend from a favourable consideration of that man's claim, whose hospitality you now accept of. It was with an insolent sneer at Mr. Cashel's simplicity——"

"Pray stop, Sir—not too far, I beseech you. The whole affair, into which by some extraordinary self-delusion you consider yourself privileged to obtrude, is very simple. This cottage and the grounds appertaining to it are mine. This old gentleman, for whom I entertain the highest respect, is *my* tenant. The legal proof of what I say, I promise to submit to you within the week; and it was to rescue Mr. Cashel from the inconsistency of pledging himself to what was beyond his powers of performance, that I interfered. *Your* very ill-advised zeal prevented this; and rather than increase the awkwardness of a painful situation, I endured a very unprovoked and impertinent remark. Now, Sir, you have the full explanation of my conduct, and my opinion of yours; and I see no reason to continue the interview." So saying, Linton touched his hat and turned back towards the cottage.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### TUBBERMORE TRANSFORMED.

**Ay, Sir, the knave is a deep one.**
OLD PLAY.

To save our reader the tedious task of following Mr. Linton's movements, however necessary to our story some insight into them may be, we take the shorter, and therefore pleasanter course, of submitting one of his own brief notes to Roland Cashel, written some three days after his arrival at Tubbermore:

"Still here, my dear Cashel, still in this Tipperary Siberia, where our devotion to your service has called and still retains us—and what difficulties and dangers have been ours! What a land!—and what a people! Of a truth, I no longer envy the rich landed proprietor—as, in my ignorance, I used to do some weeks back. To begin. Your Château de Tubbermore, which seems a cross between a gaol and a county hospital without, and is a downright ruin within, stands in a park of thistles and docks, whose luxuriant growth are a contemptuous reflexion upon your trees, which positively don't grow at all. So ingeniously placed is this desirable residence, that although the country, the river, and the mountains, offer some fine landscape effects, not a vestige of any of them can be seen from your windows. Your dining-room, late a nursery for an interesting family of small pigs, looks out upon the stables, picturesque as they are in fissured walls and tumbling rafters; and one of the drawing-rooms—they call it the blue room—a tint so likely to be caught up by the spectators—opens upon a garden—but what a garden! Fruit-trees there are none—stay, I am unjust, two have been left standing to give support to a clothes-line, where the amiable household of your caretaker, Mr. Cane, are pictorially represented by various garments, crescendo from the tunic of tender years to the full-grown 'toga.' But why enumerate small details? Let me rather deal in negatives, and tell you there is not a whole pane of glass in the entire building—not a grate—few doors—little flooring, and actually no roof. The slates, where there are such, are so loose that the wind rattles among them like the keys of a gigantic piano, and usually ends with a grand Freischutz effect, which uncovers a room or two. The walls are everywhere so rotten, that if you would break a loop-hole, you throw down enough to drive a 'break' through; and as for the

chimneys, the jackdaw may plead the Statute of Limitations, and defy to surrender a possession which certainly dates from the past century! Perystell is in despair; he goes about sticking his thumb through the rotting timbers, and knocking down partitions with a kick of his foot, and exclaiming against the ignorance of the last age of architects, who, I take it, were pretty much like their successors, save in the thefts committed from Greek and Roman models. This is not tempting, nor the remedy for it easy. Stone and mortar are as great luxuries here as ice-cream at Calcutta; there are no workmen, or the few are merely artificers in mud. Timber is an exotic—glass and iron are traditions; so that if you desire to be an Irish country gentleman, your pursuit of territorial ascendancy has all the merit of difficulty. Now—que faire? Shall we restore, or, rather, rebuild, or shall we put forty pounds of Dartford gunpowder in one of the cellars, and blow the whole concern to him who must have devised it? Such is the course I should certainly adopt myself, and only feel regret at the ignoble service of the honest explosive.

"Perystell, like all his tribe, is a pedant, and begins by asking for two years, and I won't say how many thousand pounds. My reply is, 'Months and hundreds *vice* years and thousands,'—and so we are at issue. I know your anxiety to receive the people you have invited, and I feel how fruitless it would be to tell you with what apologies I, if in your place, should put them off; so pray instruct me how to act. Shall I commissio a Perystell to go to work in all form, and meanwhile make a portion of the edifice habitable? or shall I—and I rather admire the plan—get a corps of stage artificers from Drury Lane, and dress up the house as they run up a provincial theatre? I know you don't care about cost, which, after all, is the only real objection to the scheme, and if you incline to my suggestion about the fireworks, for a finish, it will be perfectly appropriate.

"'My own cottage'—so far, at least, as I could see of it without intruding on the present occupant—is very pretty: roses, and honeysuckle, and jasmines, and such-like ruralities, actually enveloping it. It is well placed, too, in a snug little nook, sheltered from the north, and with a peep at the river in front—just the sort of place where baffled ambition and disappointment would retire to, and where, doubtless, some of these days, Tom Linton, not being selected by her Majesty as Chief Secretary for the Home Office, will be announced in the papers to have withdrawn from public life, to prosecute the more congenial career of literature.' There is a delicious little boudoir, too—such is it at present; you or I would make it a smoking crib—looking over the Shannon, and with a fine bold mountain, well wooded, beyond. I should like a gossip with you in that bay-window, in the mellow hour, when confidence, which hates candles, is at its full.

"Have I told you everything? I scarcely know, my head is so full of roof-trees, rafters, joists, gables, and parapets. Halt! I was forgetting a pretty—that is not the word—a handsome girl, daughter or granddaughter of our tenant Mr. Corrigan, one of those saintly, virginal heads Raphael painted, with finely pencilled eyebrows, delicate beyond expression above; severe, in the cold, unimpassioned character of the mouth and lips; clever, too, or, what comes to nearly the same, odd and eccentric, being educated by an old St. Omer priest, who taught her Latin, French, Italian, with a dash of Theology, and, better than all, to sing Provençal songs to her own accompaniment on the piano. You'll say, with such companionship, Siberia is not so bad after all, nor would it, perhaps, if we had nothing else to think of. Besides, she is as proud as an Austrian Archduchess—has the blood of, God knows how many, kings—Irish, of course—in her veins, and looks upon me—Saxon that I am—as a mountain-ash might do on a mushroom."

There was no erasure but one, and that very slight, and seeming unimportant: he had written Tubber-beg at the top of the letter, and, perceiving it, had changed it to Tubbermore, the fact being that he had already established himself as an inmate of the "Cottage," and a guest of Mr. Corrigan. We need not dwell on the arts by which Linton accomplished this object, to which, indeed, Mr. Corrigan's hospitable habits contributed no difficulty. The "Doctor" alone could have interposed any obstacle, and he, knowing the extent of Linton's power, did not dare to do so, contenting himself to watch narrowly all his proceedings, and warn his friend whenever warning could no longer be delayed.

Without enjoying the advantages of a careful education, Linton's natural quickness counterfeited knowledge so well that few, in every-day intercourse, could detect the imposition. He never read a book through, but he skimmed some thousands, and was thoroughly familiar with that process so popular in our Universities, and technically termed "cramming" an author. In this way, there were few subjects on which he could not speak fairly, a faculty to which considerable fluency and an easy play of fancy lent great assistance. His great craft, however, was—and whatever may be said on the subject, it would seem the peculiar gift of certain organisations—that he was able, in an inconceivably short time, to worm himself into the confidence of almost all with whom he came in contact. His natural good sense, his singularly clear views, his ever-ready sympathy, but, more than all, the dexterity with which he could affect acquaintance with topics he was all but totally ignorant of, pointed him out as the very person to hear the secrets of a family.

Mr. Corrigan was not one to exact any great efforts of Linton's tact in this walk; his long isolation from the world, joined to a character naturally frank, made him communicative and open; and before Linton had passed a week under his roof, he had heard all the circumstances of the old forfeiture, and the traditionary belief of the family that it had been withdrawn under a special order of the King in council.

"You are quite right," said Linton, one night, as this theme had been discussed for some hours, "never to have alluded to this in any correspondence with Cashel. His hasty and excitable temper would have construed the whole into a threat—and there is no saying how he might have resented it."

"I did not speak of it for a very different reason," said old Corrigan, proudly; "I had just accepted a favour—and a great one—at his hands, and I would not tarnish the lustre of his noble conduct by even the possibility of self-interest."

Linton was silent—a struggle of some kind seemed working within him, but he did not speak, and at last sauntered from the room, and passed out into the little garden in front.

He had not gone far, when he heard a light footstep on the gravel behind him. He turned, and saw Mary Leicester.

"I have followed you, Mr. Linton," said she, in a voice whose agitation was perceptible, "because I thought it possible that some time or other, in your close intimacy with Mr. Cashel, you might allude to this topic, and I know what distress such a communication would occasion to my grandfather. Our claim—if the word be not inapplicable—can never be revived; for myself, there is no condition of privation I would not rather meet, than encounter the harassing vicissitudes of a struggle which should embitter my poor dear grandfather's few years on earth. The very mention of the theme is sure to render him irritable and unhappy. Promise me, then, to avoid the subject as much as possible, here, and never to advert to it, elsewhere."

"Should I not be doing you a gross injustice by such a pledge?" said Linton, mildly.

"I can endure that; I cannot support the alternative. Make me this promise."

"I make it, truly and solemnly; would it were in my power to pledge myself to aught of real service to Miss Leicester."

"There is one such," said Mary, after a pause, "and yet I am ashamed to ask it—ashamed of the presumption it would imply—and yet I feel acquitted to my own heart."

"What is it?—only tell me how I can serve you," said Linton, passionately.

"I have scarce courage for the avowal," said she, in a low, faint voice "It is not that my self-love can be wounded by any judgment that may be pronounced,—it is rather that I dread failure for itself. In a word, Mr. Linton, certain circumstances of fortune have pressed upon my grandfather's resources, some of which I am aware of—of others ignorant. So much, however, do I know, that the comforts, so necessary to his age and habits, have diminished one by one—each year seeing some new privations, where increasing infirmity would demand more ease. In this emergency, I have thought of an effort—you will smile at the folly, perhaps, but be lenient for the motive—I have endeavoured to make some of the many reminiscences of his own early years contribute to his old age, and have written certain short sketches of the time, when, as a youth, he served as a soldier of the body-guard of Louis XVI. I know how utterly valueless they are in a literary point of view—but I have thought that, as true pictures of a time now probably passed away never to return, they might have their interest. Such is my secret. My entreaty is, to ask of you to look at them, and, if not utterly unworthy, to assist me regarding their publication."

"I not only promise this, but I can pledge myself to the success," said Linton; "such recitals of life and manners as I have listened to from Mr. Corrigan would be invaluable; we know so little in England——"

"Nay, let me stop you; they are written in French. My hope is to procure their insertion in some French journal, as is the custom now-a-days. Here they are," said she, handing him a packet with a trembling hand. "I have but to say, that if they be all I fear them, you will be too true a friend to peril me by a rejection." And without waiting for a reply, she hurried back to the house.

Many minutes had not elapsed ere Linton found himself in his room, with the open manuscript before him. It was quite true, he had not in anticipation conceived a very high idea of Miss Leicester's efforts, because his habit, like that of a great number of shrewd people, was to regard all amateur performances as very inferior, and that only they who give themselves wholly up to any pursuit attain even mediocrity. He had not, however read many pages ere he was struck by the evidence of high ability. The style was everywhere simple, chaste, and elegant; the illustrations natural and graceful; and the dialogue, when occurring, marked by all the epigrammatic smartness which characterised the era.

The sketches also had the merit of life-pictures—real characters of the day, being drawn with a vigour that only actual knowledge could impart All these excellences Linton could perceive and estimate; but there were many very far above his power of appreciation. As it was, he read on, fascinated by the interest the scenes inspired, nor ceased till the last page was

completed, when, throwing himself on his bed, he fell soon asleep, and dreamed of Mary Leicester.

His very first care, on waking, was to resume the manuscript, and see how far the impression first made might be corroborated by afterthought. It was while reading, that the post had just arrived, bringing, among other letters, one in Phillis's hand, which was, though brief, significant:

"Sir,—There is no time to be lost. The K.'s are here every day, and Lord C—— spends every morning here till three or four O'C. Mr. Meek has written to ask for Mr. C.'s interest in the borough—what answer given, not known. Mr. C. would seem to be again pressed for money. He was here twice yesterday. The rumour is, that Mr. C. will marry Miss O. K. immediately. Pearse overheard Mr. K. warning Mr. C. against Mr. Linton as a very dangerous intimate. Ld. C. F. said, when sitting here yesterday, 'I have known Master Tom some years, and never knew the man he did not help to ruin with whom he had any influence.' Mr. C. said something about being on his guard, and 'suspecting'—but the exact words were not heard. Lord K. and Lady breakfasted with Mr. C. to-day, and stayed till two. Lady K. swept down with her dress a Sèvres jar in the boudoir—heard Mr. C. say that he would not give the fragments for the most precious vase in the Tuileries. Lord K. asked what he said, and her Ladyship replied that Mr. C.'s vase was unhappily the fellow of one in the Tuileries, and looked confused at the accident. Mr. Linton is warned to lose no time, as Mr. C. is hourly falling deeper into other influences—and every day something occurs to injure Mr. L.'s interest.—Honoured Sir, in duty yours, "P.

"N.B.—The yacht came into harbour from Cowes last night"

The same day which brought this secret despatch saw one from Linton to Cashel, saying, that by the aid of four hundred workmen in various crafts, unceasing toil, and unwearied zeal, Tubbermore would be ready to receive his guests by the following Wednesday. A steamer, hired specially, had brought over from London nearly everything which constitutes the internal arrangement of a house, and as money had been spent without control, difficulties melted away into mere momentary embarrassments—impossibilities there were none. The letter contained a long list of commissions for Cashel to execute, given, however, with no other object than to occupy his time for the remaining few days in town as much as possible. This, written and sent off, Linton addressed himself to his task of preparation with an energy few could surpass, and while the tradespeople were stimulated by increased pay to greater efforts, and the work was carried on through the

night by torchlight, the whole demesne swarmed with labourers, by whom roads were cut, paths gravelled, fences levelled, flower-plots devised, even the garden—that labyrinth of giant weeds—was reduced to order, till in the hourly changing aspect of the place it was hard not to recognise the wand of enchantment. It was, indeed, like magic to see how fountains sprang up, and threw their sprayey showers over the new-planted shrubs; new paths led away into dense groves of trees; windows, so late half walled up, now opened upon smooth, shaven turf, or disclosed a reach of swelling landscape; and chambers, that a few days back were the gloomy abode of the bat and the night-owl, became of a sudden cheerful and lightsome.

Stuccoed ceilings, mirror-panelled windows, gilded cornices, and carved architraves—all of which would imply time and long labour—were there at once and on the moment, for the Good Fairy who did these things knows not failure—the Banker's Cheque-book. From the great hall to the uppermost chamber the aspect of all bespoke comfort. The elegances of life, Linton well knew, are like all other refinements, not capable of being "improvised," but the daily comforts are. The meaner objects which make up the sum of hourly want—the lazy ottoman, the downy-pillowed fauteuils, the little squabs that sit in windows to provoke flirtations and inspire confidences; the tempting little writing-tables that suggest pen and ink; the billiard-table, opening on the flower-garden, so redolent of sweet odours, that you feel exonerated for the shame of an in-door occupation; the pianos, and guitars, and harps scattered about in various places, as though to be ever ready to the touch; the books, and prints, and portfolios, that give excuse to the lounging mood, and text for that indolent chit-chat, so pleasant of a morning,—all these, and a thousand other things, seen through the long perspective of a handsome suite of rooms, do make up that sum, for which our own dear epithet, "comfort," has no foreign equivalent.

We have been often compelled, in this veracious history, to reflect with harshness on certain traits of Mr. Linton's morality. Let us make him the small amende in our power to say, that in his present functions he was unsurpassable—and here, for the moment, we leave him.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### BAD GENERALSHIP.

They alle agrede to disagree,
A moste united Familie!

Great was the excitement and bustle in the Kennyfeck family on the arrival of a brief note from Roland Cashel, setting forth that the house at Tubbermore was at length in a state to receive his guests, who were invited for the following Wednesday.

Although this visit had rarely been alluded to in Cashel's presence, it was a very frequent topic of the family in secret committee, and many were the fears inspired by long postponement that the event would never come off. Each, indeed, looked forward to it with very different feelings. Independent of all more purely personal views, Mrs. Kennyfeck speculated on the immense increase of importance she should obtain socially, in the fact of being domesticated in the same house with a Commander of the Forces and his lady, not to speak of Secretaries, Aides-de-Camp, and Heaven knows what other functionaries. The young ladies had prospective visions of another order, and poor Kennyfeck fancied himself a kind of agricultural Metternich, who was about, at the mere suggestion of his will, to lay down new territorial limits on the estate, and cut and carve the boundaries at his pleasure.

Aunt Fanny, alone, was not warmed by the enthusiasm around her; first of all, there were grave doubts if she could accompany the others, as no precise invitation had ever been accorded to her; and although Mrs. Kennyfeck stoutly averred "she was as good as asked," the elder daughter plainly hinted at the possible awkwardness of such a step, Olivia preserving between the two a docile neutrality.

"I'm sorry for *your* sake, my dear," said Miss O'Hara to Olivia, with an accent almost tart, "because I thought I might be useful."

"It is very provoking for all our sakes," said Miss Kennyfeck, as though quietly suffering the judgment to be pronounced; "we should have been so happy all together."

"If your father was any good, he'd manage it at once," said Mrs. K., with a resentful glance towards poor Mr. Kennyfeck, who, with spectacles on his forehead, and the newspaper on his knee, fancied he was thinking;

"We should have some very impertinent remark upon it, I'm certain," said Miss K., who, for reasons we must leave to the reader's own acuteness, was greatly averse to her aunt accompanying them, "so many of one family! I know how Linton will speak of it."

"Let him, if he dare; I wonder whose exertions placed Cashel himself in the position he enjoys," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, angrily, and darting a look of profound contempt at her husband, recognising, doubtless, the axiom of the ignoble means through which Providence occasionally effects our destinies.

"I can remain here, Mamma, for that matter," said Olivia, in a voice of angelic innocence.

"Sweet—artless creature," whispered her sister, "not to know how all our devices are exercised for her."

"It's really too provoking, Fanny," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "you were just beginning to acquire that kind of influence over him which would be so serviceable, and once in the country, where so many opportunities for joining him in his walks would occur, I calculated immensely on your assistance."

"Well, my dear, it can't be helped," sighed Aunt Fanny.

"Couldn't we allude to it to-day, when Cashel calls, and say something about your going away to the country and our regrets at parting, and so on? Olivia, you might do that very easily."

"It wouldn't do for Olivia," said Aunt Fanny, very sententiously.

"Quite right, aunt," chimed in Miss Kennyfeck; "that would be like old Admiral Martin, who shot away all his ammunition firing salutes."

"Mr. Kennyfeck!" said his spouse, with a voice of command; "I vow he is deafer every day—Mr. Kennyfeck, you must call on Mr. Cashel this morning, and say that we really cannot think of inflicting him with an entire family; that you and I alone—or you and Olivia——"

"No—no, Mr. Kennyfeck and Caroline," interposed Aunt Fanny, "say that."

"Thanks for the preference," said Miss Kennyfeck, with a short nod "I am to play lightning-conductor; isn't it so?"

"Or shall I propose going alone?" interposed Mr. Kennyfeck, in all the solemnity of self-importance.

"Isn't he too bad?" exclaimed his wife, turning to the others; "did you ever conceive there could be anything as dull as that man? We cannot trust you with any part of the transaction."

"Here comes Mr. Cashel himself," said Miss Kennyfeck, as a phaeton drove rapidly to the door, and Cashel, accompanied by a friend, descended.

"Not a word of what we were speaking, Mr. Kennyfeck!" said his wife, sternly, for she reposed slight reliance on his tact.

"Who is with him?" whispered Olivia to her sister; but not heeding the question, Miss Kennyfeck said:

"Take *my* advice, Livy, and get rid of your Duenna. You'll play your own game better."

Before there was time for rejoinder, Lord Charles Frobisher and Cashel entered the drawing-room.

"You received my note, I hope, Mrs. Kennyfeck," said Roland, as he accepted her cordially offered hand. "I only this morning got Linton's last bulletin, and immediately wrote off to tell you."

"That *is* significant," whispered Miss Kennyfeck to Olivia. "To give *us* the earliest intelligence."

"I trust the announcement is not too abrupt."

"Of course not,—our only scruple is, the largeness of our party. We are really shocked at the notion of inflicting an entire family upon you."

"Beware the Bear," whispered Lord C., in a very adroit under tone,—"don't invite the aunt."

"My poor house will only be the more honoured," said Cashel, bowing, and sorely puzzled how to act.

"You'll have a very numerous muster, Cashel, I fancy," said Lord Charles, aloud; "not to speak of the invited, but those 'Umbræ,' as the Romans called them, who follow in the suite of such fascinating people as Mrs. White."

"Not one too many, if there be but room for them; my great anxiety is, that my personal friends should not be worst off, and I have come to beg, if not inconvenient, that you would start from this on Tuesday."

"Do you contract to bring us all down?" said Frobisher. "I really think you ought; the geography of that district is not very familiar to most of us. What says Miss Kennyfeck?"

"I like everything that promises pleasure and amusement."

"What says her sister?" whispered Cashel to Olivia.

"How do you mean to travel, Mr. Cashel?" said she, in a tone which might be construed into perfect artlessness or the most intense interest.

"With you—if you permit," said Cashel, in a low voice. "I have been thinking of asking Mrs. Kennyfeck if she would like to go down by sea, and sail up the Shannon. My yacht has just arrived."

"Mamma cannot bear the water, or it would be delightful," said Olivia.

"Cannot we manage a Lady Patroness, then?" said Cashel; "would Miss O'Hara kindly consent?"

"Aunt Fanny, Mr. Cashel wishes to speak to you."

"Gare la tante!" said Frobisher, between his teeth.

"We were speaking—or rather, I was expressing a hope," said Cashel,

diffidently, "that a yacht excursion round the southern coast, and so up the Shannon, might not be an inappropriate way of reaching Tubbermore. Would Miss O'Hara feel any objection to be of the party?"

"With Caroline and me," said Olivia, innocently.

Miss O'Hara smiled, and shook her head doubtfully.

"It is very tempting, Mr. Cashel—too tempting, indeed; but it requires consideration. May I speak a word with you?" And so saying, she withdrew with Cashel into a window recess.

The interview was brief; but as they returned to the circle, Cashel was heard to say,

"I am really the worst man in the world to solve such difficulties; for in my ignorance of all forms, I incur the risk of undervaluing them; but if you thought by my inviting Lord and Lady Kilgoff——"

"Oh, by no means. My sister would never consent to that. But I will just confer with her for an instant."

"If the Kilgoffs are asked, it spoils all," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in reply to a whispered communication of her sister.

"I'll manage that," said Aunt Fanny; "I half hinted you didn't like the companionship for the girls."

"He'll invite Mrs. Leicester White, or Lady Janet, perhaps."

"He shan't. I'll take the whole upon myself."

"You *have* done it, I see," said Frobisher, coming close to Cashel, and affecting to examine his watch-guard, "and I warned you, notwithstanding."

"What could I do?" said Cashel, hopelessly.

"What you must do later on," said Lord Charles, coolly; "cut the whole concern altogether."

"Have you invited the Dean, Mr. Cashel?" interposed Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"I really cannot inform you, Madam. There has been so much confusion—Linton promising to do everything, and ask everybody; but the omission—if such——"

"Should be left where it is," muttered Frobisher.

"How long should we probably be on the voyage, Mr. Cashel?" asked Miss O'Hara.

"Three—four—or five days—perhaps more."

"I'll give you a month's sail, and back 'Time' after all," said Lord Charles.

"Oh, that is out of the question—we couldn't think of such an excursion," said Aunt Fanny.

Olivia cast a most imploring look on her aunt, and was silent.

"Another point, Mr. Cashel," said Miss O'Hara, speaking in a very low

whisper; "my sister, who is so particular about her girls—you know how they have been brought up, so rigidly, and so carefully—she is afraid of that kind of intimacy that might possibly grow up between them and—and——" Here she came to a full stop. "Didn't I hear you speak of Lady Kilgoff?"

"Yes; I thought her exactly the kind of person you'd like to have."

"Oh, she is charming—most delightful; but she is a woman of the world, Mr. Cashel," said Aunt Fanny, shaking her head.

"Indeed!" muttered Roland, not in the least guessing the drift of the remark.

"No, no, Mr. Cashel, that would never do. These sweet children have no knowledge of such people, further than the common intercourse of society. Lady Kilgoff and Mrs. White——"

"Is she another?"

"She is another, Mr. Cashel," said Aunt Fanny, oraculously.

"Then I see nothing for it but limiting the party to myself and my yacht commander—Lieutenant Sickleton, of the Navy—and I believe we have as little of the world about us as any one could desire."

It was full a minute or two before Miss O'Hara could satisfy herself that this speech was not uttered ironically; but the good-natured and frank look of the speaker at last dispelled the fear, and she said,

"Well, if you really ask my opinion, I'd say, you are right. For our parts—that is, for the girls and myself, I mean—we should like it all the better, and if you wouldn't find us too tiresome companions——"

Miss O'Hara was interrupted here by Mrs. Kennyfeck, who, with considerable agitation in her manner, said, "I must beg pardon for disturbing your agreeable *tête-à-tête*, Mr. Cashel, but I wish to say one word to my sister."

As they retired together, Frobisher came up, and, drawing his arm within Roland's, led him to a window: "I say, old fellow, you are going too fast here; hold in a bit, I advise you."

"How do you mean?—what have I done?"

"It's no affair of mine, you know, and you may say I'm devilish impertinent to mix myself up in it, but I don't like to see a fellow 'sold,' notwithstanding."

"Pray be explicit and frank—what is it?"

"Well, if you'll not take it ill——"

"I promise I shall not—go on."

"Do you mean to marry that little girl yonder, with the blue flower in her hair?"

"I cannot say that I do, or that I do not," said Roland, getting very red.

"Then, you're making a very bad book, that's all."

"Oh, you're quite mistaken; I don't suspect her of the slightest feeling towards me——"

"What has that to say to it, my dear fellow?" interrupted Frobisher. "I didn't imply that she was in love with you! I wanted to warn you about the mess you're getting into—the family fracas—the explanation asking—the sermonising—the letter-writing—the tears, reproaches, distractions—ay, and the damages, too!—devilish heavy they'd be against one like you, with plenty of 'ready.' Hush! they're coming."

Miss O'Hara advanced towards Cashel, and Frobisher retired; her mien and carriage were, however, statelier and more imposing, with less of cordiality than before. "We cannot agree upon the details of this excursion, I find, Sir; my sister's scruples—Mr. Kennyfeck's doubts—the difficulties, in short, of every kind, are such, that I fear we must relinquish it."

Cashel bowed deeply, without uttering a word; the insinuations of Frobisher were added in his mind to the suspicion that some secret game was being played against him, and his manly nature was insulted by the doubt.

Aunt Fanny, perhaps, perceived she had gone too far, for, reassuming her former smile, she said, "Not that we despair of one day or other taking a pleasure-trip in your beautiful vessel."

"You do me too much honour by expressing such a hope," said Cashel, gravely; and then turning to Frobisher, added, "Will you drive me down to Kingstown? I want to go on board for a few minutes."

"We see you at seven o'clock, I hope?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a whisper.

"I regret to have made an engagement for to-day, Madam," replied Cashel, stiffly. "Good morning, ladies. Very sorry, Miss O'Hara, our sea intentions have been a failure. Let me hope for better luck on land."

"Will you not be here this evening?" said Olivia, as he passed close to her; and there was in the swimming eye and tremulous voice enough to have melted a harder heart than Roland's; but this time he was proof against all blandishments, and with a very cold negative, he departed.

"There is hope for you yet, old fellow," said Lord Charles, as he walked down stairs beside him; "you did that extremely well."

Now, although Roland was far from knowing what he had done, or how to merit the praises, he was too well pleased with the momentary repose the flattery afforded to question further. Meanwhile, a very excited scene took place in the house they had just quitted, and to which, for a brief space, we must return.

On a sofa in one corner of the room sat Olivia Kennyfeck, pale and trembling, her eyes tearful, and her whole air bespeaking grief and agitation.

At the window close by stood Miss Kennyfeck, the calm composure of her face, the ease of her attitude, the very types of internal quiet. She looked out, up the square, and playing on the woodwork of the window an imaginary pianoforte air, while in the back drawing-room sat Mrs. Kennyfeck and Miss O'Hara, side by side on a sofa, their excited looks and heightened complexions attesting the animation of the controversy, for such in reality it was.

"I thought you would go too far—I knew you would," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an angry gesture of the hand.

"What do you mean by too far?" rejoined her sister. "Is it in the face of a letter like this that you would permit him to continue his attentions, and, worse still, let the girls go off for an excursion of maybe a week or two? Read that."

"The letter is anonymous, and may be untrue from end to end."

"Then why not let me test its truth by some allusion to its contents?"

"And banish him from the house ever after," rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, bitterly. "No, no, Fanny, you mistake him very much; he isn't like one of your old County Clare admirers, that can be huffed to-day, and asked to dinner to-morrow—not that, indeed, you showed much judgment in your management even of them."

This allusion to Aunt Fanny's spinsterhood was too palpable to pass unnoticed, and she arose from the sofa with a face of outraged temper.

"It might be a question, my dear, between us, which had the least success—I, who never got a husband—or you, who married that one."

If Mr. Kennyfeck had intended by a tableau to have pointed the moral of this allusion, he could not have succeeded better, as he sat bolt upright in his chair, endeavouring through the murky cloud of his crude ideas to catch one ray of light upon all he witnessed—he looked the very ideal of hopeless stupidity. Miss O'Hara, like a skilful general, left the field under the smoke of her last fire, and Mrs. Kennyfeck sat alone, with what Homer would call **"a heart-consuming rage,"** to meditate on the past.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### LIEUTENANT SICKLETON'S PATENT PUMP.

The mariner's chart
He knew by heart,
And every current, rock, and shore,
From the drifting sand
Off Newfoundland,
To the sun-split cliffs of Singapore.

CAPTAIN PIKE.

LORD CHARLES FROBISHER was never a very talkative companion, and as Cashel's present mood was not communicative, they drove along, scarcely interchanging a sentence, till the harbour of Kingstown came in sight, and with it the gay pennons that fluttered from the mast of Roland's schooner.

"I suppose that is your yacht—the large craft yonder?"

"I hope so," said Cashel, enthusiastically; "she sits the water like a duck, and has a fine rakish look about her."

"So, then, you never saw her before?"

"Never. I purchased her from description, taking her crew, commander, and all, just as she sailed into Southampton from Zante, a month ago. They sent me a drawing of her, her measurement, tonnage, and draught of water, as also the log of her run in the Mediterranean;—yes, that's she, I can recognise the water-line from the sketch."

"Is your visit on board going to be a long one?" drawled out Lord Charles, languidly, "for I own I am not the least aquatic, and were it not for lobsters and whitebait I vote the sea a humbug."

"Then I'll say good-by," said Cashel. "That blue water, that curling ripple, and the fluttering of that bunting, have sent me a thinking about a hundred things."

"You'll dine with us at seven, won't you?"

"No, I'll dine on board, or not dine at all," said he, as he sprang from the carriage, and, waving his hand in adieu, made his way to the harbour. Taking the first boat that offered, Cashel rowed out to the yacht, just in time to catch Lieutenant Sickleton, who, in full yacht costume, was about to wait on his principal. He was a bluff, good-natured, blunt fellow, who having neither patronage nor interest in the service, had left the wardroom for the easier, but less ambitious, life of a yacht commander; a thoroughly good seaman, and brave as a lion, he saw himself reduced to a position

almost menial from hard and galling necessity. He had twice been to Alexandria with touring Lords, who, while treating him well in all essentials, yet mingled so much of condescension in their courtesy, as to be all but unendurable. He had gone to America with a young Oxford man, the son of a great London brewer, whose overbearing insolence he had been obliged to repel by a threat of personal consequences. He had taken an invalid family to Madeira, and a ruined Duke to Greece, and was now, with the yacht and its company, transferred to Cashel's hands, not knowing—scarce caring—with whom or where his future destinies were to be cast.

The Freemasonry of the sea has a stronger tie than the mere use of technicals. Cashel was not ten minutes on board ere Sickleton and he were like old acquaintances. The *Lucciola* was, in Sickleton's ideas, the best thing that ever ran on a keel. There was nothing she couldn't do—fair weather or foul. She could outsail a Yankee smack in a gale off the coast of Labrador, or beat a felucca in the light winds off the Gulf of Genoa. If these tidings were delightful to Cashel's ears—the most exciting and heart-stirring he had listened to for many a day—the gratification was no less to Sickleton, that he was about to sail with one who really loved the sea, and thoroughly understood, and could value, the qualities of his noble craft.

From the vessel, they turned the conversation to all the possible places the world's map afforded for a cruise. Sickleton's experiences were chiefly Eastern—he knew the Mediterranean as well as he did the Downs—while Cashel's could vie with him in both coasts of the great Spanish peninsula, and all the various channels of the West India islands. For hours they sat discussing soundings, and trade winds, and shore currents, with all the bearings of land points, bluffs, and lighthouses. In talk, they visited half the globe—now staggering under a half-reefed topsail in the Bay of Biscay—now swimming along, with winged and stretching sails, under the blue cliffs of Baia.

"I'm sure I don't know how you ever could lead a shore life," said Sickleton, as Cashel described with warm enthusiasm some passages of his rover's existence.

"Nor do I understand how I have borne it so long," said Cashel; "its dissipations weary—its deceits provoke me. I have lost—if not all—great part of that buoyancy which mingled peril and pleasure create, and I suppose, in a month or two more, I should be about as apathetic, as indolent, and as selfish as any fine gentleman ought to be. Ah, if we had a war!"

"That's it—that's what I say every day and every night—if we had a war, the world would be worth living in or dying for. Fellows like myself, for instance, are never thought of in a peace, but they 'look us all out'—

just as they do a storm-jib, when it comes on to blow—no laughing a man out of position, then—no, faith!"

"How do you mean?" said Cashel, who saw in the intense expression of the speaker how much the words covered.

"Just what happened to myself—that's all," said Sickleton; "but if you like to hear how—the story isn't long, or any way remarkable—we'll have a bit of luncheon here, and I'll tell it to you."

Cashel willingly assented, and very quickly a most appetising meal made its appearance in the cabin, to which Sickleton did the honours most creditably.

"I'm impatient for that anecdote you promised me," said Cashel, as the dessert made its appearance, and they sat in all the pleasant enjoyment of social ease.

"You shall hear it—though, as I said before, it's not much of a story either; nor should I tell it, if I didn't see that you feel a sort of interest about myself—unhappily, its hero.

"I'll not weary you by telling you the story that thousands can repeat, of a service without patronage, no sooner afloat than paid off again, and no chance of employment, save in a ten-gun brig off the coast of Guinea, and I suppose you know what that is?"

Cashel nodded, and Sickleton went on.

"Well, I passed as lieutenant, and went through my yellow fever in the Niger very creditably. I was the only one of a ship's company in the gun-room on the way back to England, after a two years' cruise; I suppose because life was less an object to me than the other fellows, who had mothers, and sisters, and so on. So it was, I brought the old *Amphion* safe into dock, and was passed off to wander about the world, with something under forty pounds in my pocket, and a 'good-service letter' from the Admiralty—a document that costs a man some trouble to gain, but that would not get you a third-class place in the rail to Croydon, when you have it. What was I to do?—I had no interest for the Coast-Guard. I tried to become keeper of a lighthouse, but failed. It was no use to try and be a clerk—there were plenty of fellows, better qualified than myself, walking the streets supperless. So I set myself a thinking if I couldn't do something for 'the service' that might get me into notice, and make the 'Lords' take me up. There was one chap made his fortune by 'round sterns, though they were known in the Dutch Navy for two centuries. There was another invented a life-boat; a third, a new floating buoy—and so on. Now I'm sure I passed many a sleepless night thinking of something that might aid me; at one time it was a new mode of reefing topsails in a gale—at another it was a change in signalising the distant ships of a squadron

—now an anchor for rocky bottoms—now a contrivance for lowering quarter-boats in a heavy sea,—till at last, by dint of downright hard thought and perseverance, I did fall upon a lucky notion. I invented a new hand-pump, applicable for launches and gun-boats—a thing greatly wanted—very simple of contrivance, and easy to work. It was a blessed moment, to be sure, when my mind, instead of wandering over everything from the round top to the taffrail, at last settled down on this same pump!

"It was not mere labour and study this invention caused me. No! it swallowed up nearly every shilling of my little hoard. I was obliged to make a model, and what with lead and zinc, and solder and leather, and caoutchouc and copper, I was very soon left without 'tin;' but I had hope, and hope makes up for half rations! At last, my pump was perfect; the next thing was to make it known. There was no use in trying this through any unprofessional channels. Landsmen think that as they pay for the Navy, they need not bother their heads about it further. 'My Lords,' I knew well, wouldn't mind me, because my father wasn't in Parliament, and so I thought of one of those Magazines that devote themselves to the interests of the two services, and I wrote a paper accordingly, and accompanied it by a kind of diagram of my pump. I waited for a month—two—three months—but heard nothing—saw nothing of my invention. I wrote, but could get no answer. I called, but could see no Editor: and at last was meditating some personal vengeance, when I received a note. It was then much after Midsummer, few people in town, and the Magazines were printing anything—as no one reads them in the dog-days—stating that if Lieutenant Sickleton would procure a woodcut of his pump, the paper descriptive of it should appear in the next number. That was a civil way of asking me for five pounds; but help there was none, and so I complied.

"At length I read in the list of the contents, 'Lieutenant Sickleton's New Hand-Pump, with an Illustration'—and my heart bounded at the words. It was the nineteenth article—near the end of the number. I forget what the others were—something of course about Waterloo, and Albuera, and the Albert chako, and such-like stuff. My pump, I knew, put it where they would, was *the* paper of the month. This feeling was a little abated on finding that, as I walked down Fleet-street on the day of publication, I didn't perceive any sign of public notice or recognition; no one said as I passed, 'That's Sickleton, the fellow who invented the new pump.' I remembered, however, that if my *pump* was known, *I* was not as yet, and that though the portrait of my invention had become fame, my own was still in obscurity.

"I betook myself to the office of the journal, expecting there at least to

find that enthusiastic reception the knowledge of my merits must secure, but hang me, if one of the clerks—as to the Editor, there was no seeing him—took the slightest trouble about me. I told him, with, I trust, a pardonable swelling of the bosom, that I was 'Sickleton.' I didn't say the famous Sickleton, and I thought I was modest in the omission; but he wasn't in the least struck by the announcement, and I quitted the place in disgust.

"Worse than all, when I came to read over my paper, I found, by the errors of the press, that the whole diagram was spoiled. The letters had been misplaced, and the Fiend himself, if he wanted it, couldn't work my pump. You see that C D represented the angular crank, F was the stop-cock, and T the trigger that closed the piston. Hang me, if they didn't make F the trigger, and instead of B being the cistern, it was made the jet; so that when you began to work, all the water squirted through the sluices at O P Q over the operator. I went nearly mad. I wrote a furious letter to the Editor—I wrote another to the *Times*—I wrote to the *Globe*, the *Post*, and the *Herald*. I explained—I elucidated—I asked for the Englishman's birthright, as they call it—'Justice'—but no use! In fact, my reclamations could only be inserted as advertisements, and would cost me about a hundred pounds to publish. So I sat down to grieve over my invention, and curse the hour I ever thought of serving my country.

"It was about six months after this—I had been living on some relations nearly as poor as myself—when I one day received an order to 'wait at the Admiralty the next morning.' I went, but without hope or interest. I couldn't guess why I was sent for, but no touch of expectancy made me anxious for the result.

"I waited from eleven till four in the ante-room; and at last, after some fifty had had audiences, Lieutenant Sickleton was called. The time was I would have trembled at such an interview to the very marrow of my bones. Disappointment, however, had nerved me now, and I stood as much at ease and composed as I sit here.

"'You are Mr. Sickleton?' said the First Lord, who was a 'Tartar.'

"'Yes, my Lord.'

"'You invented a kind of pump—a hand-pump for launches and small craft, I think?'

"'Yes, my Lord.'

"'You have a model of the invention, too?'

"'Yes, my Lord.'

"'Can you describe the principle of your discovery—is there anything which, for its novelty, demands the peculiar attention of the Admiralty?'

"'Yes—at least I think so, my Lord,' said I, the last embers of hope

beginning to flicker into a faint flame within. 'The whole is so simple, that I can, with your permission, make it perfectly intelligible even here. There is a small double-acting piston——'

"'Confound the fellow! don't let him bore us, now,' said Admiral M——, in a whisper quite loud enough for me to overhear it. 'If it amuse his Majesty, that's enough. Tell him what's wanted, and let him go.'

"'Oh, very well,' said the First Lord, who seemed terribly afraid of his colleague. 'It is the King's wish, Mr. Sickleton, that your invention should be tested under his Majesty's personal inspection, and you are therefore commanded to present yourself at Windsor on Monday next, with your model, at eleven o'clock. It is not very cumbrous, I suppose?'

"'No, my Lord. It only weighs four and a half hundred-weight.'

"'Pretty well for a model: but here is an order for a waggon. You'll present this at Woolwich.' He bowed, and turned his back, and I retreated.

"Sharp to the hour of eleven I found myself at Windsor on the following Monday. It was past two, however, before his Majesty could see me. There were audiences and foreign Ambassadors, papers to read, commissions to sign—in fact, when two o'clock came, the King had only got through a part of his day's work, and then it was luncheon-time. This was over about three; and at last his Majesty, with the First Lord, two Admirals, and an old Post-Captain, who, by the way, had once put me in irons for not saluting his Majesty's guard when coming up to the watch at midnight, appeared on the terrace.

"The place selected for the trial was a neat little parterre outside one of the small drawing-rooms. There was a fountain supplied by two running streams, and this I was to experiment upon with my new pump. It was trying enough to stand there before such a presence; but the uppermost thought in my mind was about my invention, and I almost forgot the exalted rank of my audience.

"After due presentation to his Majesty, and a few common-place questions about where I had served, and how long, and so on, the King said, 'Come now, Sir. Let us see the pump at work, for we haven't much time to lose.'

"I immediately adjusted the apparatus, and when all was ready, I looked about in some dismay, for I saw no one to assist the working. There were present, besides the King and the three naval officers, only two fellows in full dress liveries, a devilish-sight more pompous-looking than the King or the First Lord. What was to be done? It was a dilemma I had never anticipated; and, in my dire distress, I stepped back and whispered a word to old Admiral Beaufort, who was the kindest-looking of the party

"'What is he saying?—what does he want?' said the King, who partly overheard the whisper.

"'Mr. Sickleton remarks, your Majesty, that he will need assistance to exhibit his invention—that he requires some one to work the pump.'

"'Then why didn't he bring hands with him?' said the King, testily. 'I suppose the machine is not self-acting, and that he knew that before he came here.'

"I thought I'd have fainted at this rebuke from the lips of royalty itself, and so I stammered out some miserable excuse about not knowing if I were empowered to have brought aid—my ignorance of Court etiquette—in fact, I blundered—and so far, that the King cut me short by saying, 'Take those people there, Sir, and don't delay us;' pointing to the two gentlemen in cocked hats, bags, and swords, that looked as if they could have danced on my grave with delight.

"In a flurry—compared to which a fever was composure—I instructed my two new assistants in the duty, and stationing myself with the hose to direct the operation of the jet, I gave the word to begin. Well! instead of a great dash of water spurting out some fifty feet in height, and fizzing through the air like a rocket, there came a trickling, miserable dribble, that puddled at my very feet! I thought the sucker was clogged—the piston stopped—the valves impeded—twenty things did I fancy—but the sober truth was, these gilded rascals wouldn't do more than touch the crank with the tips of their fingers, and barely put sufficient force in the pressure to move the arm up and down. 'Work it harder—put more strength to it,' I whispered, in mortal fear to be overheard, but they never minded me in the least. Indeed, I almost think one fellow winked his eye ironically when I addressed him.

"'Eh—what!' said the King, after ten minutes of an exhibition that were to me ten years at the galleys, 'these pumps do next to nothing. They make noise enough, but don't bring up any water at all.'

"The First Lord shook his head in assent. Old Beaufort made me a sign to give up the trial, and the Post-Captain blurted out, in a half-whisper, something about a 'blundering son of a dog's wife,' that nearly drove me mad.

"'I say, Sickleton,' said the King, 'your invention's not worth the solder it cost you. You couldn't sprinkle the geraniums yonder in three weeks with it.'

"'It's all the fault of these d—d buffers, please your Majesty,' said I, driven clean out of my senses by failure and disgrace—and, to be sure, as hearty a roar of laughter followed as ever I listened to in my life—'if they'd

only bear a hand and work the crank as I showed them——' As I spoke, I leaned over and took hold of the crank myself, letting the hose rest on my shoulder.

"With two vigorous pulls I filled the pistons full, and, at the third, rush went the stream with the force of a Congreve—not, indeed, over the trees, as I expected, but full in the face of the First Lord; scarcely was his cry uttered, when a fourth dash laid him full upon his back, drenched from head to foot, and nearly senseless from the shock. The King screamed with laughing—the Admiral shouted—the old Post-Captain swore—and I, not knowing one word of all that was happening behind my back, worked away for the bare life, till the two footmen, at a signal from the Admiral, laid hold of me by main force, and dragged me away, the perspiration dripping from my forehead, and my uniform all in rags by the exertion.

"'Get away as fast as you can, Sir,' whispered old B., 'and thank God if your day's work only puts you at the end of the list.' I followed the counsel—I don't know how—I never could recollect one event from that moment till I awoke the next morning at my aunt's cottage at Blackwall, and saw my coat in tatters, and the one epaulette hanging by a thread; then I remembered my blessed invention, and I think I showed good pluck by not going clean out of my mind."

There was an earnestness in poor Sickleton's manner that effectually repressed any mirth on Cashel's part—indeed, his sense of the ludicrous gave way before his feeling of sorrow for the hard fortune of the man without a friend. In the partial civilisation of the Far West, personal prowess and energy were always enough to secure any man's success; but here, each day's experience taught him how much was to be laid to the score of family—of fortune—name—address—and the thousand other accessories of fortune. He had just begun to express his wonder that Sickleton had never tried life in the New World, when the mate appeared at the cabin-door to say that a shore boat was rowing out to the yacht.

A movement of impatience broke from Sickleton. "More of 'em, I suppose," cried he; "we've had such a lot of sight-seers this morning, since we dropped anchor! most of them affecting to be intimate friends of yours, and all so well acquainted with your habits of life, that I should have become perfectly informed on every particular of your private history only by listening."

"The chances are," broke in Cashel, "I did not personally know a man amongst them."

"I half suspect as much. They spoke far too confidently to be authentic. One would have it you were half ruined already, and had got the yacht over

to clear away, and be off. Another, that you were going to be married to a lady with an immense fortune—a rumour contradicted by a third saying it was an attorney's daughter without a shilling."

"There's a lady, I see, Sir, coming on board," said the mate, putting in his head once more.

"I'd swear there was," growled Sickleton.

"You give them luncheon, I hope?" said Cashel, smiling at the other's impatience.

"Yes; we've had something like an ordinary here, to-day, and as I heard that to-morrow would be busier still, I have had my boat going backwards and forwards all the morning to prepare."

"I am desired to show you this card, Sir," said the mate, handing one to Sickleton, who passed it to Cashel.

"Lord Kilgoff—indeed!" said he, surprised, and at once hastened to the deck.

"Mr. Cashel himself here!" exclaimed my Lady, from the stern of a small boat alongside; and after an exchange of friendly recognition, the party ascended the gangway.

"This was a pleasure we scarcely looked for, to meet you here," said his Lordship, blandly. "We had just taken our drive down to the harbour, when accidentally hearing your yacht had arrived, Lady Kilgoff grew desirous to see it."

"A yacht in harbour is a horse in stable," said Cashel. "Will you permit me to give you a cruise?"

"I should like nothing in the world so well."

"It is late—almost six o'clock," said Lord Kilgoff, looking at his watch.

"And if it be," said my Lady, coaxingly, "you know Dr. Grover recommended you the sea air and sea excursions. I declare you look better already; don't you think so, Mr. Cashel?"

"I protest I do," said Cashel, thus appealed to; "and if you will only pardon the deficiencies of a floating cuisine, and dine here——"

"How delightful!" broke in my Lady, not suffering even time for an apology.

"It appeared to me there was a haunch of venison hanging over the stern when we came on board?" said my Lord, with his glass to his eye.

"Yes, my Lord," said Sickleton, touching his hat in salutation; "I've had it there for two hours every day since Tuesday week."

"And is the wind, and the tide, and everything else as it should be, Mr Cashel?" said Lady Kilgoff.

"Everything—when you have only uttered your consent," said he gallantly.

"What is this, Sir?" said my Lord, as, having requested something to drink, Sickleton poured him out a large glassful of scarcely frothing liquid.

"Dry champagne, my Lord. Moët's."

"And very excellent too. Really, Laura, I am very sorry it should be so late, and we were to have dined with Meek at seven——'

"But only alone—no party, remember that," said she, persuasively; "how easy to send the carriage back with an apology."

Cashel looked his thanks, but without speaking.

"Take those red partridges out of ice," said Sickleton, from the cook's galley, "and let us have those Ostend oysters to-day."

"I yield," said my Lord. "Mr. Cashel must take all the consequences of my breach of faith upon himself."

"I promise to do so, my Lord."

"A pen and ink, and some paper, Mr. Cashel," said her Ladyship.

"Will you permit me to show you the way," said he, handing her down into the little cabin, whose arrangement was all in the perfection of modern taste and elegance.

"How beautiful!" cried she. "Oh! Mr. Cashel, I really do envy you the possession of this fairy ship. You don't know how passionately I love the sea."

"There are but few things I could hear you say with so much pleasure to me," said Cashel, gazing with a strange feeling of emotion at the brilliant colour and heightened expression of her handsome features.

"There! that is finished," said she, closing the hastily-written note "Now, Mr. Cashel, we are yours." However much of course the words were in themselves, her eyes met Cashel's as she spoke them, and as suddenly fell; while he, taking the letter, left the cabin without speaking—a world of curious conjecture warring in his heart.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A SPLIT IN THE KENNYFECK CABINET.

Like "cat and dog!" not so! *their* strife
They carried on like "man and wife."

FAMILY JARS.

It may easily have escaped our reader's memory, that on Roland Cashel's hasty departure from Mr. Kennyfeck's, the seeds of a very serious schism had been sown in that respectable family, Mrs. Kennyfeck being firmly persuaded that her liege lord had grossly mismanaged his influence over the young proprietor; the girls as resolutely opposed to each other; and all, with a most laudable unanimity, agreed in thinking that Aunt Fanny "had spoiled everything," and that but for her odious interference there never would have arisen the slightest coolness between them and their distinguished acquaintance.

"I may lose the agency!" said Mr. Kennyfeck, with a sigh of afflicting sincerity.

"I shouldn't wonder if he avoids the house," quoth his wife.

"He evidently rejects all attempts at domination," said Miss Kennyfeck, with a glance at her aunt. Olivia said nothing; but it was not difficult to see that her thoughts were full of the theme. Meanwhile, Miss O'Hara, in all the dignity of injured rectitude, sat seemingly unconscious of the popular feeling against her, repeating from time to time the ominous words, "We shall see—we shall see;" a species of prophetic warning that, come what may, can always assert its accomplishment.

With such elements of discord and discontent, the breakfast proceeded gradually, and the broken attempts to talk had subsided into a sullen silence, when the butler entered to say that Mr. Phillis begged to speak a few words with Mr. Kennyfeck.

"Let him come in here," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as her husband was rising to leave the room. "I think, if there are to be no more blunders, we had better be present at the conference."

"Show him in, Pearse," said Mr. Kennyfeck, in a meek voice; and the gentleman's gentleman entered, in all that easy self-sufficiency so peculiar to his class.

"What is it, Mr. Phillis?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a commanding tone,

meant to convey the information of "where the Court sat," and to whom he should address his pleading.

"It's a little matter on which I wanted advice, Ma'am, for I am really puzzled how to act. You know, Ma'am, that we are expecting large company at our place in the country—Tubb—something——"

"Tubbermore," interposed Mr. Kennyfeck.

"Yes, Sir, Tubbermore. Well! there have been at least twenty messages this morning from different families, who want to know the best way of going, and when Mr. Cashel means to go himself, and where post-horses are to be had, and how they are to get forward where there are none, and so on."

"Is your master not the person to dictate the answer to these queries?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with her grandest air.

"Of course, Ma'am, but he's not here."

"Where is he, then?" asked she, eagerly.

"He's gone, Ma'am; he went last night."

"Gone!—gone where?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an eagerness no artifice could cover.

"It's hard to say, Ma'am; but he went down to Kingstown last night, and sailed in the yacht; and from the preparations and sea stores taken from the hotel, it would seem like a long cruise."

"And did he not mention anything of his intention to *you*, Mr. Phillis?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a flattering emphasis on the pronoun.

"A few lines in pencil, Ma'am, dated from the harbour, was all I received. Here they are." And he handed a piece of note-paper across the table.

The contents ran thus:

"Phillis, send word to Sir Harvey Upton's that I shan't dine there to-morrow. Give the bearer of this my dressing-case, and clothes for some days, and have the fourgon ready packed to start for Tubbermore on receiving my next orders.

"R. C.—Kingstown Harbour."

"And who brought this note?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, who fancied she was conducting the inquiry in true judicial form.

"One of the yacht sailors, Ma'am; he came up on Lord Kilgoff's carriage."

"On Lord Kilgoff's carriage—how did that happen?"

"The carriage came into town, Ma'am, to bring some things my Lady sent for; at least, so the sailor told me."

"And were Lord and Lady Kilgoff on board the yacht?"

"Yes, Ma'am; they both sailed in her last night."

As though drawn by some irresistible influence, every eye was now turned to Aunt Fanny, who, up to this, had listened to Mr. Phillis with a breathless attention, and if looks could be translated, every glance thus thrown said plainly, "This is *your* doing."

"Are you certain that the yacht has not returned to Kingstown?" said Miss O'Hara.

"Perfectly, Ma'am. It blew a storm last night, and the sailors about the harbour told me it was a great chance that any small vessel could outlive the gale."

Olivia Kennyfeck became deadly pale at these words, and whispered something in her sister's ear.

"Of course," replied the other, aloud; then turning to Phillis, said, "Had they a pilot with them?"

"I believe so, Miss, but there are so many contradictory reports, one don't know what to credit; some say that Lord Kilgoff was greatly opposed to the cruise, but that her Ladyship insisted, and that, in fact, they got under weigh at last without my Lord's knowing, and while they were at dinner."

"It was a fearful night!" said Mr. Kennyfeck, whose mind was entirely engrossed by the one idea.

"Take him into the next room, and I'll join you presently," said Mrs. Kennyfeck to her husband, for that keen-sighted lady had remarked the intense interest with which Mr. Phillis listened to every remark made around him.

"Here's a pretty piece of business!" cried she, as the door closed after her husband and the valet; "and certainly, I must say, we've no one to thank for it but you, Fanny!"

"Unquestionably not," echoed Miss Kennyfeck. "Aunt Fanny has the entire merit of this catastrophe."

"It is most cruel," sighed Olivia, as she wiped the tears from her eyes, and bent upon her stern relative a glance of most reproachful sadness.

"Are you all mad?" said the assailed individual, her courage and her colour rising together. "How can you pretend to connect me with this disgraceful proceeding? Here's a case as clearly prearranged as ever was heard of."

"Impossible!" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck; "didn't he invite us only yesterday to go down to Tubbermore by sea?"

"And didn't you yourself offer the only impediment?" said Miss Kennyfeck.

"You are very cruel, Aunt," sobbed Olivia.

"You'll drive me out of my senses," said Miss O'Hara; and certainly her look did not belie her words. "I endeavour to rescue you from the snares of a young debauchee, who, as you well know, has a wife still living——"

"There, I hope you are content now," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as Olivia fell fainting into her arms; and the window was thrown open, and all were busied in employing the wonted restoratives for such attacks. Meanwhile, hostilities were continued, but in a less rigorous fashion. "You know you've ruined everything—you know well how your officious meddling has destroyed this poor child's fortune; rub her temples, Cary."

"I know that he is a dissipated, abandoned wretch, that would desert her to-morrow as he has done that unhappy——"

"Hush, she is coming to. You want to kill her."

"Humph!" muttered Aunt Fanny; "this scene might be very effective with the young gentleman, but is quite thrown away upon me."

"Aunt! aunt!" cried Miss Kennyfeck, reprovingly.

"If we had just followed our own counsels, we should have this very hour been on the way to Tubbermore, perhaps never to leave it!"

Aunt Fanny shook her head.

"Yes. You may affect to doubt and hesitate, and all that, but where is the wonderful condescension in a Mr. Cashel proposing for the grand-niece of Roger Miles O'Hara, of Kilmurray O'Hara of Mayo, the second cousin of Lawrence O'Hara Kelly, that ought to be Lord Bally Kelly?"

"Fairly enough, if that was all," slipped in Miss O'Hara, hoping to escape from all danger by climbing up the genealogical tree whereon her sister was perched.

"If that was all!" repeated Mrs. Kennyfeck, indignantly, catching at the last words, "and what more is wanting, I'd be glad to ask? But, to be sure, it was rather a mistake to call to our counsels, in such a case, one that never could succeed in her own."

This terrible taunt at Miss O'Hara's celibacy didn't go unpunished, for, throwing all attempts at conciliation behind her, she rose, with flashing eyes and trembling lips.

"So, it is you that tell me this," said she—"*you*, that dare to sneer at *my* being unmarried—you, that were fain to take up with a Dublin attorney—poor Tom Kennyfeck—the hack of the quarter sessions, serving latitats and tithe notices over the country in his old gig——Indeed, girls, I'm sorry to speak that way of your father, but it's well known——"

A loud shriek interrupted the speech, and Mrs. Kennyfeck, in strong hysterics, took her place beside Olivia.

"It will do her good, my dear," said Aunt Fanny to her niece, as she

chafed the hands and bathed the temples of her mother. "I was only telling the truth; she'd never have married your father if Major Kennedy hadn't jilted her; and good luck it was he did, for he had two other wives living at the time—just as your friend, Mr. Cashel, wanted to do with your sister."

"Aunt—aunt—I entreat you to have done. Haven't you made mischief enough?"

"Eaten up with vanity and self-conceit," resumed the old lady, not heeding the interruption. "A French cook and a coach-and-four—nothing less! Let her scream, child—sure I know it's good for her—it stretches the lungs."

"Leave me—leave the room!" cried Miss Kennyfeck, whose efforts at calmness were rendered fruitless by the torrent of her aunt's eloquence.

"Indeed I will, my dear; I'll leave the house, too. Sorry I am that I ever set foot in it. What with the noise and the racket night and day, it's more like a lunatic asylum than a respectable residence."

"Send her away—send her away!" screamed Mrs. Kennyfeck, with a cry of horror.

"Do, aunt—do leave the room."

"I'm going—I'm going, young lady; but I suppose I may drink my cup of tea first—it's the last I'll ever taste in the same house;" and she reseated herself at the table with a most provoking composure. "I came here," resumed she, "for no advantage of mine. I leave you without regret, because I see how your poor fool of a father, and your vain, conceited mother——"

"Aunt, you are really too bad. Have you no feeling?"

"That's just what comes of it," said she, stirring her tea tranquilly. "You set up for people of fashion, and you don't know that people of fashion are twice as shrewd and 'cute as yourself. Faith, my dear, they'd buy and sell you, every one. What are they at all day, but roguery and schemes of one kind or other, and then after 'doing' you, home they go, and laugh at your mother's vulgarity!"

A fresh torrent of cries from Mrs. Kennyfeck seemed to show that unconsciousness was not among her symptoms, and Miss Kennyfeck now hastened from the room to summon her father to her aid.

"Well, you've come to turn me out, I suppose?" said Aunt Fanny, as the old gentleman entered in a state of perplexity that might have evoked the compassion of a less determined enemy.

"My dear Miss Fanny——"

"None of your Four Courts blarney with me, Sir; I'm ready to go—I'll leave by the coach to-night. I conclude you'll have the decency to pay for my place, and my dinner too, for I'll go to Dawson's Hotel this minute.

Tell your mother, and that poor dawdle there, your sister, that they'd be thankful they'd have followed my advice. The rate you're living, old gentleman, might even frighten you. There's more waste in your kitchen than in Lord Clondooney's. As for yourself, Caroline, you're the best of the lot; but your tongue, darling!—your tongue!" And here she made a gesture of far more expressive force than any mere words could give.

"Is she gone?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, as a slight lull succeeded.

"Yes, Mamma," whispered Miss Kennyfeck; "but speak low, for Mr. Phillis is in the hall."

"I'll never see her again—I'll never set eyes on her," muttered Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"I shouldn't wonder, Mamma, if that anonymous letter was written by herself," said Caroline. "She never forgave Mr. Cashel for not specially inviting her; and this, I'm almost sure, was the way she took to revenge herself."

"So it was," cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, eagerly seizing at the notion. "Hush, take care Livy doesn't hear you."

"As for the yacht expedition, it was just the kind of thing Lady Kilgoff was ready for. She is dying to be talked of."

"And that poor, weak creature, Cashel, will be so flattered by the soft words of a Peeress, he'll be intolerable ever after."

"Aunt Fanny—Aunt Fanny!" sighed Miss Kennyfeck, with a mournful cadence.

"If I only was sure—that is, perfectly certain—that she wrote that letter about Cashel——But here comes your father—take Olivia, and leave me alone."

Miss Kennyfeck assisted her sister from the sofa, and led her in silence from the room, while Mr. Kennyfeck sat down, with folded hands and bent-down head, a perfect picture of dismay and bewilderment.

"Well," said his wife, after a reasonable interval of patient expectation that he would speak—"well, what have you to say for yourself now, Sir?"

The poor solicitor, who never suspected that he was under any indictment, looked up with an expression of almost comic innocence.

"Did you hear me, Mr. Kennyfeck, or is it that you want to pass off your dulness for deafness? Did you hear me, I say?"

"Yes, I heard—but I really do not know—that is, I am unaware how—I cannot see——"

"Oh, the old story," sighed she—"injured innocence! Well, Sir, I was asking you if you felt gratified with our present prospects? Linton's intimacy was bad enough, but the Kilgoff friendship is absolute, utter ruin. That crafty, old, undermining Peer, as proud as poor, will soon ensnare him

and my Lady, with her new airs of a Viscountess, only anxious to qualify for London by losing her character before she appears there!"

"As to the agency——"

"The agency!" echoed she, indignantly, "do your thoughts never by any chance, Sir, take a higher flight than five per cent.?—are you always dreaming of your little petty gains at rent-day? I told you, Sir, how the patron might be converted into a son-in-law—did I not?"

"You did, indeed, and I'm certain I never threw any impediment in the way of it."

"You never threw any impediment in the way of your child's succeeding to a fortune of sixteen thousand a year! You really are an exemplary father."

"I'd have forwarded it, if I only knew how."

"How good of you. I suppose you'd have drawn up the settlements if ordered. But so it is—all my efforts through life have been thwarted by you! I have laboured and toiled day and night to place my children in the sphere that their birth, on one side at least, would entitle them to, and you know it."

Now this Mr. Kennyfeck really did not know. In his dull fatuity he always imagined that he was the honey-gatherer of the domestic hive, and that Mrs. Kennyfeck had in her own person monopolised the functions of queen bee and wasp together.

"Your low, pettifogging ambition never soared above a Softly or a Clare Jones for your daughters, while I was planning alliances that would have placed them among the best in the land—and how have I been rewarded? Indifference, coolness, perhaps contempt!" Here a flood of tears, that had remained dammed up since the last torrent, burst forth in convulsive sobs. "Ungrateful man, who ought never to have forgotten the sacrifice I made in marrying him—the rupture with every member of my family—the severance of every tie that united me to my own."

She ceased, and here, be it remembered, Mrs. Kennyfeck seemed to address herself to some invisible jury empannelled to try Mr. Kennyfeck on a serious charge.

"He came like a serpent into the bosom of our peaceful circle, and with the arts that his crafty calling but too well supplied, seduced my young affections."

Mr. Kennyfeck started. It had never before occurred to him that Don Juan was among his range of parts.

"False and unfeeling both," resumed she. "Luring with promises never intended for performance, you took me from a home, the very sanctuary of peace!"

Mr. Kennyfeck wiped his forehead in perplexity; his recollection of the home in question was different. Sanctuary it might have been, but it was against the officers of the law and the sheriff, and so far as a well-fastened hall door and barricaded windows went, the epithet did not seem quite unsuitable.

"Ah!" sighed she—for it is right to remark that Mrs. Kennyfeck was a mistress of that domestic harmony which consists in every modulation, from the grand adagio of indignant accusation to the rattling andante of open abuse—"had I listened to those older and wiser than I, and who foretold the destiny that awaited me, I had never seen this unhappy day! No, Sir! I had not lived to see myself outraged and insulted, and my only sister turned out of the house like a discarded menial."

Had Mr. Kennyfeck been informed that for courteously making way for a Bencher in the Hall he was stripped of his gown and degraded from his professional rank, he could not have been more thoroughly amazed and thunderstruck. He actually gasped with excess of astonishment, and, if breath had been left him, would have spoken; but so it was, the very force of the charge stunned him, and he could not utter a word.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kennyfeck, who in the ardour of combat had imitated certain Spanish sailors, who in the enthusiasm of a sea-fight loaded their cannons with whatever came next to hand, was actually shocked by the effect of her own fire. For the grandeur of a peroration she had taken a flying leap over all truth, and would gladly have been safe back again at the other side of the fence.

For an instant not a word dropped from either side, and it was clear that he who spoke first had gained the victory. This was the lady.

"Go, Sir"—and she wiped her eyes with that calm dignity by which a scolding wife seems to call up all Christian forgiveness of herself, and stand acquitted before her own conscience—"go, Sir, and find out what these people that Cashel has invited mean to do; and if it be their intention to repair to Tubbermore, let us lose no time in setting out; and if we are to go, Mr. Kennyfeck, let us do so as becomes us."

Mr. Kennyfeck stifled a rising sigh—for he knew what the words denoted—and departed; while Mrs. Kennyfeck, with her heart lightened of a heavy load, rose to join her daughters, and discuss dress and "toilette," the great commissariat of the approaching campaign.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### STORM AND WRECK.

> Tut, never mind the swell, love,
> The sails may sweep the brine;
> But the craft will steer as well, love,
> With your soft hand in mine.
>
> - THE CRUISE.

IT was upon a delicious evening, a little before sunset, that a yacht worked out of the harbour of Kingstown, all her canvas spread to catch the light air of wind, which scarcely ruffled the glassy surface of the Bay. The craft, with her snow-white sails, her tall and taper spars, her gay bunting from gaff and peak, was all that the scene wanted to render it a perfect picture; and so, to all seeming, thought the many spectators who crowded the pier and the shore, and gazed with admiration at the graceful vessel, as she glided silently above her own image in the water.

Various were the comments and criticisms from those who surveyed her course; some, in wondering conjecture whither she was bound; others, not a whit better informed, boldly affecting some secret knowledge of her destination, and even, by such petty pretension, assuming airs of superiority.

"She belongs to that rich young fellow, Roland Cashel," said one of these, "who, by the way, is getting through his fortune tolerably fast. The story goes, that he has spent two hundred thousand already, and is borrowing at immense interest."

"Wasn't he a smuggler, or a privateer's-man, or something of the kind?"

"No; he made all the money in the slave trade."

"I always heard that he succeeded to a landed estate," softly insinuated a modest-looking old gentleman.

"Not at all, Sir. Such, I am aware, was the common belief; the fact, however, is, that he had invested large sums in land, and was then able to escape the scrutiny many would have instituted regarding the origin of his wealth."

"Who is it he is always riding with about town—a handsome girl, on a brown horse?"

"On a grey, you mean."

"No, a brown, with a bang tail."

"No, no, it's a grey. She's a daughter of Tom Kennyfeck, the attorney."

"The gentleman is right," interposed a third. "I've seen him very often with a lady mounted on a brown thorough-bred."

"Oh! that's Lady Kilgoff, the handsomest woman in Ireland."

"She was much better-looking two years ago," simpered out an Ensign, affectedly. "I used to dance with her and her sister at the race balls at Ashby."

The group immediately fell back, in tacit acknowledgment of the claim of one so aristocratically associated.

"Didn't you know her, Hipsley?" lisped out the Ensign to a brother officer, who was admiring a very green baby on the arm of a very blooming nursery-maid. "You knew the Craycrofts, didn't you?"

"Lady Kilgoff's maiden name, Sir, was Gardiner," said the timid old gentleman who spoke before.

The Ensign stuck his glass in one eye, and gazed at him for a second or two, with consummate effrontery, and then, in a voice intended for the most cutting drollery, said:

"Are you certain it wasn't 'Snooks?'"—a rejoinder so infinitely amusing, that the bystanders laughed immoderately, and the bashful man retired, overwhelmed in confusion.

"They're off for a good long cruise," said one, looking through his pocket telescope at the yacht, which now was steering to the southward, with a fresher breeze.

"I suspect so. They took on board five or six hampers from the hotel, just before they sailed."

A very warm controversy now arose as to where the yacht was bound for, and who were the parties who went on board of her in the harbour; points which, in the absence of all real knowledge, admitted of a most animated debate. Meanwhile, an old weather-beaten sailor, in a pilot coat, continued to gaze alternately from the sky to the sea, and back again, and at last murmured to himself:

"They'll catch it before midnight, if they don't haul their wind, and get into shelter."

Some drifting clouds, dropping slight rain as they passed, soon after cleared the pier of its loiterers, and night fell, dark and starless, while the wind freshened, and the sea fretted and chafed upon the rocks, and even sent its spray high against the strong lighthouse.

Let us now quit the shore, and bear company with the party on board, who, having dined sumptuously, sat sipping their coffee on deck, while the swift craft skimmed the calm waters of the Bay, and unfolded in her course

the beautiful panorama of the shore—the bold steep bluff of Brayhead, the curved strand of Killiney, the two "Sugar Loaves" rising from the bosom of dark woods, and, in the distance, the higher chain of the Wicklow mountains, while on the opposite side Howth seemed like a blue island studding the clear surface of the Bay. Lord Kilgoff and Mr. Sickleton paid but passing attention to the bright picture around. A learned discussion on naval matters, wherein my Lord took the opportunity of storing his mind with a goodly stock of technicals, to be used at some future occasion, occupied them altogether, leaving her Ladyship and Roland Cashel to the undisturbed enjoyment of the scene and its associations.

They paid the highest tribute the picturesque can exact—they sat in silence watching the changing tints, which from red faded to violet, then grey, and at last grew dark with closing night, while the wind freshening sent the sea rushing swiftly past, and made their light craft heave and pitch heavily.

"We are returning to Kingstown, I trust?" said my Lord to Sickleton, who had left him for a moment, to give orders about shortening sail. "It appears to me like a threatening night."

"It looks dirty, my Lord," said Sickleton, dryly, as he walked aft with the Pilot, and conferred with him in a low tone.

"Are we making for Kingstown, Mr. Cashel?" said my Lord, in a voice he was not able to divest of anxiety.

"I believe not," said Cashel, rising, and approaching the compass. "No we are lying down Channel straight as we can go."

"Ay, and very well for us that we can do it," growled out the Pilot. "If we make the Hook Light before we tack, I shall say we're lucky."

"Does he mean there is any danger, Mr. Cashel?" said Lady Kilgoff, but in a voice devoid of tremor.

"None whatever; but I am sadly distressed at having carried you out so far, since I find that in the present state of the tide, and with the wind still driving more to the north, we cannot bear up for Kingstown, but must run along the shore."

"Think nothing of that," said she, gaily; "real peril I have no fancy for—a mere inconvenience is of no moment whatever; but"—here she dropped her voice very low—"say something to my Lord—give him some encouragement."

"It blows fresh, my Lord, and if it were not for the trespass on your comfort, I should almost rejoice at the occasion of showing you my yacht's qualities as a sailing-boat."

"I should prefer taking your word for them, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff,

tartly; "a pleasure-trip is one thing, a night in a small vessel exposed to a heavy gale is another."

"You're right, my Lord," said the Pilot, who heard but a part of the observation; "it will be a gale before morning."

"Luff! luff, there!" shouted Sickleton; and at the same instant a heavy sea thundered against the bow and broke over the forepart of the vessel with a crashing sound.

"I think when we see the Lighthouse of Kingstown so near us," said Lord Kilgoff, "there ought to be no great difficulty in returning."

"That's not the Harbour-light you see yonder—that's the Kish, my Lord," said the Pilot. "Keep her up, my man, keep her up, the wind is freshening."

"Will you indeed forgive me for this disastrous turn of our cruise?" said Cashel, as he fastened his boat cloak around Lady Kilgoff's throat, after several vain efforts to induce her to go below.

"If you only prevent my Lord from scolding, I shall enjoy it immensely," said she, in a half whisper.

"I trust, Lady Kilgoff," said his Lordship, approaching, and steadying himself by the bulwarks, "that this night's experience will induce you to distrust your own judgment when in opposition to mine. I foresaw the whole of it. It is now blowing a fierce gale——"

"Not a bit of it, my Lord," interposed the Pilot, bluntly; "but it will blow great guns 'fore daybreak, or I'm mistaken."

"And where shall we be then?" asked my Lord, querulously.

"Rayther hard to tell," said the Pilot, laughing. "If she be as good a sea-boat as they say, and that we don't carry away any of our spars, we may run for Cove. I take it——"

"For Cove! Gracious mercy! and if she be not as good a vessel as it is said she is, Sir, what then, pray?"

The Pilot made no reply, but gave orders to set the jib, as she was labouring too much by the head.

The wind increased, and with it the sea, which, dividing at the bow, fell in great cataracts over the vessel, sweeping along the entire deck at every plunge she gave.

"I wish she were a little deeper in the water," whispered Sickleton to Cashel. "We haven't within fifteen tons of our ballast on board. But she's a sweet craft, ain't she? Keep her, there—steady, man."

"We couldn't stand round in stays, and bear up for the harbour?" asked Cashel, on whom Lord Kilgoff's face of misery had made a strong impression.

"Impossible! At least the Pilot, who knows this coast well, says there is a shore current here runs eight knots."

"What shall we do with him? He'll scarce live through the night."

"Let us get him down below, and, once snug in a berth, he'll fall asleep, and forget everything."

Cashel shook his head doubtfully, but determined to try the plan at all hazards.

"Would my Lord be persuaded to lie down, do you think?" said Roland, approaching Lady Kilgoff, who, enveloped in the folds of the heavy boat-cloak, sat calm and collected near the wheel.

"Is there danger?" asked she, hurriedly.

"Not the least; but he seems so ill, and every sea rushes over him as he stands."

"You should go down, my dear Lord," said she, addressing him; "Mr. Cashel is afraid you'll catch cold here?"

"Ah, is he indeed?" said Lord Kilgoff, in a snappish asperity. "He is too good to bestow a thought upon me."

"I am only anxious, my Lord, that you shouldn't suffer from your complaisance so unhappily rewarded."

"Very kind, exceedingly kind, Sir. It is as you say, most unhappy—a perfect storm—a hurricane. Gracious mercy! what's that?"

This exclamation was caused by a loud smash, like the report of a cannon-shot, and at the same moment the taper topmast fell crashing down, with all its cordage clattering round it. The confusion of the accident, the shouting of voices, the thundering splash of the sea, as, the peak having fallen, the craft had lost the steadying influence of the mainsail, all seemed to threaten immediate danger. Cashel was about to spring forward and assist in cutting away the entangled rigging, when he felt his hand firmly grasped by another, whose taper fingers left no doubt to whom it belonged.

"Don't be alarmed—it is nothing," whispered he, encouragingly; "the mishap is repaired in a second."

"You'll not leave me," said she, in a low tone, which thrilled through every fibre of his heart. He pressed her hand more closely, and tried, but in vain, to catch a glimpse at her face.

Meanwhile, the disordered rigging had been repaired, and two men under Sickleton's direction, lifting the drooping and scarce conscious Peer from the deck, carried him down below.

If the old instincts of Roland Cashel's sailor life would have rendered the scene interesting to him, watching as he did the way his craft "behaved," and marking well the fine qualities she possessed as a sea-boat, there was another and far more intense feeling then occupying him as he stood close

beside that swathed and muffled figure, who, pale and silent, marked by some gesture, from time to time, her dependence upon him. To Roland, the rattle of the gale, the hissing sea, the strained and creaking cordage, all, not only brought back old memories of his once life, but effectually seemed to dispel the colder mood of mind which admixture with the world of fashion had impressed upon him. He was again, if not in reality, in heart and spirit, the bold Buccaneer that walked the Western seas, bursting with life, and eager for adventure. Every plunge that sent the bowsprit down, every squall that bent the taper mast, and laid the vessel half-seas under, inspirited and excited him, not the less that the wild storm called forth every form of encouragement to her, who vibrated between actual terror and a strange sense of delight.

Roland lay at her feet, partly as a barrier against the surging water that, breaking over the bow, swept the entire deck, partly that he might mark those beauteous features, on which the binnacle light occasionally cast its glare.

"It is fine," murmured she, in a low soft voice, "and I almost feel as if my own terrors should serve to heighten the sense of ecstasy. I tremble while I delight in it."

There was an expression of intense excitement in her eyes as she spoke, and her pale features for an instant flushed, as Roland's look met hers.

"How I glory in your words," cried he, wild with enthusiasm; "I feel like one who suddenly awakes to life out of some long and dreary sleep—rather this is the sleep—this is itself the vision in which I lie, here, beneath your smile, while we are borne onward through the hissing foam. Oh, would it but last—would that this dark and starless night could be for years, and that we might thus cleave the black waters on and on."

"And whither to?" asked she, in a whisper scarcely breathed.

"Whither to?" echoed he; "what matters it, while we journey thus? The sun-tipped icebergs of the North Sea, or the rosy mountains of the Spice Island; the balmy shores of Quito, or the bleak coast of Labrador—all are alike to me."

"A large vessel under the lee!" sang out a voice from the bow, and the cry was repeated still louder, while the Pilot shouted, "Show a light at the mast-head; put your helm hard up." The double command was scarce obeyed, when a huge black mass heaved past them, her great yards almost seeming to grate the cordage. The looming size of the immense object that towered overhead, and the death-like stillness of the yacht's crew till the danger was past, thrilled with a cold terror through her, and instinctively she grasped Roland's hand more closely. The gale had now become furious, and as the light spars were barely able to sustain even the little canvas

spread, the sea swept over the vessel as she lay storm-tossed and scarce navigable. The hatches were fastened down, the boats strongly secured, and every precaution of seamanship adopted; and so long as these were in performance, and a certain activity and bustle prevailed, so long did Lady Kilgoff's courage appear to support her; but when all was done, and the men resumed their places in watchful silence, and her mind was left to the contemplation of the raging hurricane alone, she seemed to sink, and, with a faint low sigh, glided from the seat and fell fainting to the deck.

"You cannot take her below," said Sickleton, as Cashel, raising her in his arms, was about to carry her to the cabin; "we dare not open the hatches. See, there it comes again!" and, as he spoke, a great wave broke over the vessel's quarter and fell in torrents over the deck, washing, as it receded, several loose spars overboard. By the aid of coats and cloaks innumerable, Cashel at last succeeded in enveloping the fair form beside him, and, supporting her head upon his arm as he sat, he saw, to his unspeakable delight, that she soon dropped into a calm sleep.

"This is a disastrous bit of pleasuring," said Sickleton, as he stood holding on by one of the braces; "who could have supposed such a gale was brewing?"

"Well, well," replied Cashel, "if it comes no worse——"

"If it does, we can't stand through it, that's all," said the Lieutenant, dryly; "the old Pilot says we shall have to make a tack to keep clear of the Hook, but what boat can sail on a wind with a storm-jib and three-reefed topsail?"

"She behaves nobly," said Roland, as he gazed at the sleeping form, to guard which seemed all his care.

Sickleton mistook the remark, and said, "Ay, that I knew she would but the sea is tremendous for a small craft, and see how close we have the land under our lee—that black mass yonder."

"I'd give all I own in the world that she were safe on shore," murmured Cashel, not heeding the other's observation; "I cannot forgive myself for having induced her to venture out."

The Lieutenant made no reply, but peered for a few seconds through the skylight of the cabin. "My Lord is lying like a dead man," said he; "fright and sea-sickness together have nearly done for him, and yet it was only two hours back he thought he'd make a good figure at the Admiralty. There," continued he, "day is breaking yonder; we shall soon know our fate; if the gale freshens after sunrise it is all up with us."

"Run the craft in shore and I'll engage to save *her*," said Cashel, eagerly. "I'm a strong swimmer in surf; I rescued a Malabar girl once and in a sea nearly as heavy as this."

Sickleton smiled incredulously, and turned away.

"It is freshening, by Jove!" said he, as a squall struck the vessel, and laid her almost on her beam ends, while every plank shivered as though she were rending in pieces.

"It's coming stronger, Sir," said the Pilot, as he shook the sea from his rough coat and bent his gaze steadfastly towards the east; "I'd rather not see that red sunrise. Keep her away, man, keep her away!"

"Shall we try it?" muttered Sickleton, to some whispered observations of the other.

"We may as well," rejoined the Pilot; "she'll never hold steerage way with her present canvas, and if she won't bear the mainsail we must go on shore, and no help for it."

"Bear a hand there, boys," cried Sickleton; "shake out the mainsail."

"You'll carry away the mast," cried Cashel, as he heard the order.

"It's like enough," growled the Pilot, "but yonder's the lee-shore."

"I could save her—I'm certain I could save her," said Cashel.

"He's thinking of the lady!" said the Pilot to Sickleton; and the contemptuous tone showed how humbly he estimated him.

"Breakers ahead!—shoal water!" shouted a voice from the bow.

"'Bout ship!" cried Sickleton; "stand by sheets and tacks there—down helm. Are ye ready, men?" And the next moment the obedient vessel span round, and was cleaving the water on another tack.

"What is it?—where am I?—is this a dream?" said Lady Kilgoff, as she moved back the hair from her eyes, and looked up at Cashel, who for hours had never moved or stirred.

"To *me*, it has been a delicious dream," said Cashel, as he met her glance; "and if it were not that you may feel alarmed, it would be still such."

"What a terrible sea! Where are we?"

"Not far from shore," said Cashel, encouragingly.

"A devilish deal too near it, though," muttered the Pilot, under his breath.

"Oh, I remember all now. Where is my Lord, Mr. Cashel? Is he ill?"

"He's gone below—he is sleeping, I believe. It has been a wild night for *you*; and you've passed it here on the deck."

"Here?" said she, looking up and blushing, for she still lay supported against Roland, and one of his hands held the boat-cloak across her.

"Yes, here," said Cashel, with a voice and manner that made the colour mount to her cheeks and as suddenly desert them again.

Meanwhile the Lieutenant had gone below, and reappeared with a chart, over which he and the Pilot now bent in the deepest consideration.

"Then that must have been the 'Calf' Light we saw to the eastward," said Sickleton, pointing to the map.

"I'd say so too," replied the other, "if such a run didn't seem impossible; but we only tripped our anchor last night, before sunset."

"Ten hours, though!—one can do a deal in ten hours!" said the Lieutenant.

"It may be worth as many years sometimes!" said Cashel, in a whisper to her at his side.

"Breakers right ahead!" shouted the man in the bow.

"We're among the 'Barrels!'" cried the Pilot; "back the topsail—down mainsail——"

But it was too late! Like a sea-bird rising to its flight, the light craft bounded forward, till her shining copper glanced above the waves, and then, with a spring, dashed onward, amid the foam and spray that rose like a mist around her. The frothy shower flew over the deck, while the hissing water spirted up on every side with a crashing splintering sound. The keel came down, and while a loud cry broke forth, "She's struck!" the mast snapped suddenly across, and fell with its draped rigging into the sea.

"Stand by—cut away the boats!" shouted Sickleton; and seizing a hatchet, gave the example himself, while Cashel, lifting the now lifeless form of Lady Kilgoff, placed her in the boat. The confusion and terror became now extreme. The breaking sea already had forced its way through the vessel's bottom, and issued in a clear jet of blue water from the hatchways. The first boat launched was rapidly crowded, and scarcely had it touched the water than it was swamped. For an instant the struggling figures were seen battling with the waves, but, in a moment after, they were gone!

Mainly through Sickleton and Cashel's exertions, the second boat was got ready, and just about to be launched, when Roland turned to seek Lord Kilgoff, whom, up to that moment, he had entirely forgotten. Scarcely had he reached the binnacle, when the old man, pale and almost dead with terror, stood before him. "Is she safe, Sir?—is my Lady safe?" cried he, tremulously.

"Quite so—come along, there's not a moment to lose."

"Oh, Mr. Cashel, do not leave me!" cried Lady Kilgoff, as the boat was lifted from its place, and swung by the halyards from side to side.

"You cannot surely resist that appeal, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff, his withered and worn features flushed with a pang of sudden anger.

"I must see to *your* safety, my Lord, or none else is likely to do it," said

Cashel, sternly; and as he spoke he lifted the old man and placed him in the boat. "Stay where you are, Sickleton," cried he to the Lieutenant; "I'll cut her adrift. So there! my boys, all together—larboard now." And as the vessel heaved over to the surge the boat was launched. A shrill cry of terror was heard above the raging storm; for Cashel, in his eagerness to secure the others' safety, had perilled his own, and now the boiling surf rushed between the yacht and the boat, defying every effort to approach.

"Never fear for me," said Roland, boldly; "the distance is short, and I've swum in many a heavier surf." And he swung himself, as he spoke, by a loose stay into the sea. Nobly breasting the mad waves, he was seen at intervals, now borne on the white-crested billows, now deep down in the dark trough of waters. His Indian teaching had taught him, too, to dive at times through the coming surf, and thus escape its force, and so did he emerge from the great mass of waters that seemed almost to have buried him. Bending to the oars, the boat's crew pulled manfully through the tide, and at last gaining a little bay, floated into calm water, just as Cashel had got a footing on a reef of rock, a short distance from land.

"Safe!" cried he, as he drew his wearied limbs up the little craggy eminence, from which he could see the yacht still storm-lashed and heaving, and follow with his eyes the boat, as with bounding speed she made for shore.

No sooner had Sickleton safely landed his freight, than he put out again to rescue those in the yacht, while Cashel, bruised, bleeding, and torn, made his way slowly to the little hut, where Lord and Lady Kilgoff had taken shelter.

His entrance was little noticed. The cabin was full of country people and fishermen—some earnestly proffering advice and counsel, others as eagerly questioning all about the recent calamity. In a great straw chair, beside the fire, sat Lord Kilgoff, his head resting on a country-woman's shoulder, while another bathed his temples to restore animation.

"Where is she?" said Cashel, passionately; and the tone and look of the speaker turned attention towards him.

"'Tis her husband," whispered the woman of the house, curtseying respectfully to the youth, who, in all the torn disorder of his dress, looked the gentleman; and with that she drew him into an inner room, where upon a low settle lay the pale and scarce breathing form of Lady Kilgoff.

"Don't be afeard, yer Honer, she'll be betther in a minute or two. Sh. has more courage than her father there." And she pointed to the outside room where Lord Kilgoff sat. "Indeed, the first word she spoke was about yerself."

Cashel made a gesture to be silent, and sat down beside the settle, his gaze fixed on the features, which, in their calm loveliness, had never seemed more beautiful.

The stillness that now reigned in the little cabin, only broken by the low whisperings without—the calm tranquillity so suddenly succeeding to the terrible convulsion—the crowd of sensations pressing on the brain, and, above all, the immense fatigue he had gone through, brought on such a sense of stupor, that Cashel fell heavily on the floor, and, with his head leaning against the settle, fell into a sound sleep.

Before evening had closed in most of the party had recovered from their fatigues, and sat grouped in various attitudes round the blazing fire of the cabin. In a deep, old-fashioned straw chair, reclined, rather than sat, Lady Kilgoff; a slightly feverish flush lent a brilliancy to her otherwise pale features, deepening the expression of her full soft eyes, and giving a more animated character to the placid beauty of her face. Her hair, in all the loose freedom of its uncared-for state, fell in great voluptuous masses along her neck and shoulders, while part of a finely-turned arm peeped out beneath the folds of the wide scarlet cloak which the fisherman's wife had lent her in lieu of her own costly "Cashmere."

Next to her sat Roland; and although dressed in the rough jacket of a sailor, his throat encircled by a rude cravat of coloured worsted, he seemed in the very costume to have regained some of his long-lost joyousness, and, notwithstanding the sad event of the night, to be in a very ecstasy of high spirits. Sickleton, too, seemed like one who regarded the whole adventure as a circumstance too common-place for much thought, and busied himself writing letters to various persons at Cashel's dictation, sorely puzzled from time to time to follow out the thread of an intention, which Roland's devotion to the lady at his side more than once interrupted.

The most disconsolate and woe-begone of all was the poor Peer, who, propped up by cushions, sat with unmeaning gaze steadily riveted on the fire. There was something so horribly absurd, too, in the costume in which he was clad, that converted all pity into a sense of ridicule. A great wide pea-jacket encircled his shrunken, wasted figure to the knees, where the thin, attenuated legs appeared, clad in blue worsted stockings, whose wide folds fell in a hundred wrinkles around them; a woollen cap of red and orange stripes covered his head, giving a most grotesque expression to the small and fine-cut features of his face. If Lady Kilgoff and Cashel had not been too much interested on other topics, they could not have failed to discover, in the occasional stealthy glances that Sickleton cast on the old Lord, that the costume had been a thing of his own devising, and that the rakish air of the nightcap, set sideways on the head, was owing to the sailor's in-

veterate fondness for a joke, no matter how ill-timed the moment, or ill-suited the subject of it.

Behind them, and in a wider circle, sat the fisherman and his family, the occasional flash of the fire lighting up the gloom where they sat, and showing, as in a Rembrandt, the strong and vigorous lines of features where health and hardship were united,—the whole forming in the light and shadow a perfect subject for a painter.

From the first moment of the mishap, Lord Kilgoff had sunk into a state of almost child-like imbecility, neither remembering where he was, or taking interest in anything, an occasional fractious or impatient remark at some passing inconvenience being all the evidence he gave of thought. It devolved, therefore, upon Cashel to make every arrangement necessary—an assumption on his part which his natural respect and delicacy made no small difficulty. As for Lady Kilgoff, she appeared implicitly to yield to his judgment on every point; and when Roland suggested that, instead of returning to Dublin and all its inevitable rumours, they should at once proceed to Tubbermore, she assented at once, and most willingly.

It was with this object, then, that Sickleton sat, pen in hand, making notes of Cashel's directions, and from time to time writing at his dictation to various tradesmen whose services he stood in need of. It would certainly have called for a clearer head, and a calmer than Roland's, to have conducted the conversation with the lady and the command to the gentleman, who sat at either side of him. Many a sad blunder did he make, and more than once did the reply intended for her Ladyship find its way into the epistle of the Lieutenant, nor did the mistake appear till a reading of the document announced it. At these, a burst of laughter was sure to break forth, and then my Lord would look up, and, passing his fingers across his temples, seem trying to recal his lost and wandering faculties—efforts that the changeful play of his features showed to be alternately failing and succeeding, as reason, tide-like, ebbed and flowed within his brain.

It was as Sickleton wrote down at Cashel's direction the order for a considerable sum of money to be distributed among the crew of the yacht, that Lord Kilgoff, catching as it were in a momentary lucidness the meaning of the words, said aloud: "This is not munificence, Sir. I tell you this is the wasteful extravagance of the buccaneer, not the generosity of a true gentleman."

The other suddenly started at the words, and while Lady Kilgoff's deep flush of passion and Cashel's look of astonishment exhibited their feelings, Sickleton's hearty laugh showed the racy enjoyment deficient delicacy can always reap from an awkward dilemma.

"But, my Lord, you mistake Mr. Cashel," said Lady Kilgoff, eagerly

bending forward as she spoke. "His noble gift is to compensate these brave fellows for a loss, as well as reward them for an act of devotion.—How silly in me to reason with him! see, Mr. Cashel, his mind is quite shaken by this calamity."

"Your defence compensates a hundred such reproofs," said Cashel, with warmth. "Well, Mr. Sickleton," said he, anxious to quit a painful topic, "what of this schooner yacht you spoke of a while ago?"

"The handsomest craft that ever swam," said the Lieutenant, delighted to discuss a favourite theme. "Lord Wellingham has married, and they say won't keep her any longer. You'll get her for ten thousand, and the story is she cost about fourteen."

"But perhaps Mr. Cashel may soon follow her noble owner's example," said Lady Kilgoff, smiling, and with a subdued look towards Roland.

"Don't give him bad counsel, my Lady."

"It really does seem to me a kind of inveteracy thus to talk of buying a new yacht within a few hours after losing one."

"Like a widower looking out for a new wife, I suppose," said the Lieutenant, laughing.

"No, Sir, I beg to correct you," broke in my Lord, with a snappishness that made the hearers start; "her Ladyship is not yet a widow, although her levity might seem to imply it."

"My Lord, I must protest against this sarcastic humour," said she, with a mild dignity. "Our terrible catastrophe may have disturbed your right judgment, but I pray select another theme for misconstruction. Mr. Cashel, I will wish you a good night. In the difficulty in which I am placed, I can only say that my perfect confidence in your counsel satisfies me it will be such as you ought to give and I to follow."

"Yes, Sir, of course; when the lady says, 'Follow,' I hope you know a gentleman's devoir better than to disobey." These words were uttered by the old man with a sneering impertinence that augured no absence of mind; but ere the door closed upon Lady Kilgoff his face had again put on its former dull and vacant stare, and it was clear that the momentary intelligence was passed and over.

"Now, Sickleton," said Cashel, as if at length able to give his mind to the details before him, "you will haste to Dublin; send us the carriages with all the speed you can muster; pack off her Ladyship's maid and the wardrobe, and don't forget that dressing-case at Seward's. I should like to have her crest upon it, but there's no time for that—besides, we should only have more scandal in Dublin when it got abroad. Then for Kennyfeck: tell him I have no money, and stand much in need of it; for, as my

Lord says, mine are buccaneer's habits; and lastly, run over to Cowes and secure the yacht—we must have her. I'm much mistaken, or our friends here will take a cruise with us among the Greek Islands one of these days."

"Treacherous navigation, too!" said Sickleton, with a dryness that seemed to imply more than the mere words.

"What if it be, man! they say there's nothing much worse anywhere than the line of coast here beside us."

"Well, and haven't we suffered enough to make us credit the report?" He paused, and then dropping his voice to a low and cautious whisper, added, "Not but that I shall call you lucky if all the danger has ended with the loss of the vessel."

"How? what do you mean?" asked Cashel, in a tone of great eagerness.

"Cannot you guess?" said the other, with an imperturbable coolness.

"No, on my honour, I haven't a thought whither your words point."

"Then, faith, the peril is fifty times greater and nearer than I suspected," cried he, warmly. "When a man cracks on all that he can carry, and more than is safe, you at least give him credit for knowing the channel, and understanding its bearings, but when he tells you that he neither knows the course nor the soundings, why you set him down as mad."

"I shall not be very far removed from that condition if you'll not condescend to explain yourself more freely," said Cashel, with some irritation of manner. "Where is this danger? and what is it?"

Sickleton looked at him for a second or two—then at the old Peer—and, at last, with a scarcely perceptible movement of his head, motioned towards the door by which Lady Kilgoff had just passed out.

"You surely cannot mean—you do not suppose——"

"No matter what I suppose; all I say is, there are worse breakers ahead of you just now than the *Lucciola* had last night; haul your wind, and draw off while you have time. Besides, look yonder"—and he pointed with a jerk of his thumb to Lord Kilgoff, who still sat with stolid gaze fixed upon the red embers of the fire—"that would be a victory with but little honour!"

Cashel started to his feet, and, passing his hand over his forehead, seemed, as it were, trying to disabuse his mind of some painful illusion. His features, flushed and animated an instant before, had grown almost livid in pallor; and he stood, with one hand leaning on the chair from which he had risen, like one recovering from a fainting fit. At last, and with a voice husky and hoarse from emotion, he said, "Sickleton, if I had thought this—if, I say, I even believed what you hint at possible——"

"Pooh! pooh!" broke in the other; "why anchor in three fathoms

when you've deep water beside you? You'll not hug a lee-shore with a fresh breeze on your quarter; and all I ask is, that you'd not risk the loss of that noble craft merely that you may spoil the wreck."

Cashel grasped the rough seaman's hand in both his own, and shook it with warmth.

"I can only say this," said the bluff Lieutenant, rising, "if such be the object of your cruises, you must seek another shipmate than Bob Sickleton; and so good night."

"Are you going?" said Cashel, with a sorrowful voice. "I wish you were not about to leave thus."

"I have given you your bearings; that ought to be enough for you. Good night, once more." And with this the honest-hearted Lieutenant threw his boat-cloak around him, and sallied forth to the door, before which a chaise was in waiting to convey him to Dublin.

As for Roland, his agitated and excited mind banished all desire for sleep, and he wandered out upon the beach, where, resolving many a good intention for the future, he walked to and fro till day was breaking.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### MISS LEICESTER'S DREAM AND ITS FULFILMENT.

Old walls have mouths as well as ears.
THE CONVENT: A PLAY.

To us of the present day, who see what Genii are guineas, fairy tales are mere allegories. Your true sorcerer is a credit "on Coutts," and anything may be esteemed within his power who reckons by tens of thousands.

Tom Linton was experimenting on this problem somewhat largely at Tubbermore, where the old, misshapen, ugly house had undergone such a series of transformations inside and out, that the oldest inhabitant might have failed to recognise it. Roman cement and stucco—those cosmetics of architecture—had given to the front a most plausible air, and what with a great flagged terrace beneath and a balustrade parapet above, the whole had put on a wonderful look of solidity and importance. French windows and plate-glass, stuccoed architraves and richly traceried balconies, from which access was had to various terraces and flower-plats, contributed an appearance of lightness to the building, and what was lost in architectural elegance was fully recompensed by convenience and facility of enjoyment.

Within, the arrangements were excellent, and, as regarded the object in

view, perfect—various suites of apartments, so separated as to be actually like residences, abounded throughout, so that the guests might either indulge their solitude undisturbed, or mix in the wide circle of the general company. For the latter, a magnificent suite of rooms led along the entire basement story. Here, considering the shortness of the time and the difficulties encountered, Linton's skill was pre-eminently distinguished. Painting was too slow a process for such an emergency, and accordingly the walls were hung with rich silks and stuffs from the looms of Lyons, draped in a hundred graceful fashions, while the floors, laid down in the rough, were concealed by the massive texture of Persian carpets, the most costly ever brought to this country. The air of comfort and "livableness"—if we may coin a word—depicted on every side, took away the reproach of ostentatious splendour, which perhaps might have been applied to rich decorations and gorgeous details in a mere country-house. And this was managed with no mean skill, and he must have been a stern critic who could have canvassed too rigidly the merit of appliances so manifestly provided for his own enjoyment. Books and pictures—the Penates of domesticity—were there, and everything possible was done to give a semblance of long habitation to that which but a few weeks back had been a dreary ruin.

A critical eye might have detected in many instances the evidences of a more refined taste than Mr. Linton's, and so was it. Miss Leicester had frequently aided him by her advice and suggestions, and every day, when the weather permitted, saw old Mr. Corrigan and his granddaughter repair to Tubbermore, whose progress they watched with a degree of interest only felt by those whose retirement admits few sources of amusement. There was a secret cause of pride, too, in seeing the old residence of the family—marred as had been its proportions by frequent and tasteless additions—resume something of its once grandeur. Mary, whose earliest lessons in infancy had been the tales of her powerful ancestors, who lorded over an almost princely tract, entered heart and soul into a course which favoured so many of fancy's pleasantest fictions. Her greatest delight, however, was in the restoration of one part of the building, which all former innovators had apparently despaired of, and left as a species of storehouse for every kind of lumber. This was a great square tower, with an adjoining chapel, the floor of which was formed by the tombstones of her earliest ancestors. One compartment of a stained-glass window showed "the helmet and torch," the arms of the O'Regans, from which the family, by a corruption, took the name of Corrigan, and various other mementos abounded to prove the high station they had once supported.

Strongly imbued with a knowledge of the tales and customs of the

period, Mary restored the chapel to all the emblazoned splendour of the sixteenth century. The rich carvings, that modern research has discovered and carried away from the châteaux of the Low Countries, were adapted to the place, and speedily the interior put on an air of highly-preserved and cherished antiquity.

The tower adjoining was also converted into a great chamber of audience —a "Ritter-Saal," hung round with weapons of the chase and war, while great buffets displayed a wealth of antique plate and china, of gem-wrought cup and massive flagons, that lent a lustre to its otherwise too stern appearance. Lighted by a range of stained windows far from the ground, the tempered sunlight cast a mellow glance on every object; and here, in the silence of the noon, when the workmen had gone to dinner, Mary used to sit alone, some strange spell fascinating her to a spot where echoes had once awoke to the tramp of her own kinsmen's footsteps.

"Tell me, Mr. Linton," said she, as he entered suddenly, and found her seated in her favourite place, "what part of the chapel adjoins the wall we see yonder?"

"That," said Linton, musing for a second—"that, if I mistake not, must be what you styled the crypt; the——"

"Exactly!" cried she, with animation. "The crypt is somewhat lower than this chamber, two steps or so?"

"About as much."

"How strange, how very strange!" she said, half to herself.

"What is strange?" said Linton, smiling at the intense preoccupation of her features.

"You will laugh outright," said she, "if I tell you. It was a dream I had last night about this chamber."

"Pray let me hear it," said Linton, seating himself, and affecting a deep interest. "I own to a most implicit confidence in dreams."

"Which is more than I do," said she, laughing. "This has, however, so much of truth about it, as the locality is concerned, and thus far it is curious. Are you certain that you never told me before that the crypt lay outside of that wall?"

"Perfectly; since I only learned as much myself about an hour ago."

"How singular!"

"Come, do not torture my curiosity further. Let us have your dream."

"It was very short. I dreamed that I was sitting here musing and thinking over the lives and fortunes of some of those who once dwelt within these walls, and comparing their destiny with that of their descendants, only admitted, as it were, on sufferance, when suddenly a door opened

slowly there—there, in the very midst of that wall—and I could see down into the crypt, and the chapel beyond it. On the altar there were candles lighted, and I thought the figure of a man crossed and recrossed below the steps, as if settling and arranging the books and cushions; and, at last, he turned round, and I perceived that he carried in his hands a small and strongly-clasped box, and, as he came towards me, he seemed to hold this out for me to take; but, as I did not move or stir, he laid it down within the doorway, and, as he did so, the wall gradually closed up again, and no vestige of the door could be seen. Nay, so perfectly unshaken did all appear, that I remember remarking a cobweb that stretched from the frame of a picture, and hung over the spot where the door seemed to be; and there," cried she, starting up—"there, Mr. Linton, as I live, there is the cobweb!"

"Which, without doubt, you observed yesterday," said Linton, "and in your sleep the vision of our neglect was renewed."

"No, no; I never saw it before. I am confident that I never noticed it yesterday. I am sorry I revealed my dream to you," said she, perceiving that, in spite of all his tact, incredulity had lent a look of pitying compassion to his features.

"On the contrary, I beg of you to believe in all my interest for your recital; nay, I'll prove it too."

"How so?" said she, eagerly.

"Simply enough. I'll give orders at once to have a door made here, and then we shall see if the view you describe of the crypt and the chapel can be seen from this point."

"Why don't you add, and of the figure with the casket, too?" said she, smiling, "for I see you regard them all as alike veracious."

"In any case," cried Linton, "if he lay down the treasure—and treasure it must be—here in the doorway, I'll take care that the walls do not swallow it up again; we shall be able to find it in the morning."

"And will you really have this done?"

"I'll give the orders this very day."

"I must not be so silly," said she, after a pause; "the whole is too absurd. No, Mr. Linton, do not, I beg of you, do not take any notice of my folly."

"At all events," said Linton, "your dream is a most happy inspiration a door here will be a great improvement, and if the vista takes in the chapel, so much the better. Remember, too," added he, in a lower and more feeling voice—"remember what I've told you so often, that whatever we do here has, so to say, no other reward than the pleasure it gives me the doing. Our great patron has about as much gratefulness in his composition as taste.

He will neither feel thankful for our exertions, nor sensible of their success, and is just as likely to desecrate yon Ritter-Saal, by making it his smoking room."

"If I thought so——" said she, proudly, and then stopped suddenly. "But how can it concern me? I have only to wonder how you can accept of an intimacy so distasteful."

This, in its very abruptness, was a home-thrust, and so much did Linton feel it, that he reddened, at first with shame, and then with anger at his want of composure.

"There are many circumstances in life, Miss Leicester," said he, gravely, "which demand heavy sacrifices of personal feeling, and happy if sometimes the recompense come in seeing that our self-devotion has worked well for others. I may one day explain myself more fully on this head."

Before Mary could answer, a messenger came to say that her grandfather was waiting to return with her to the cottage, and she bid Linton good-by with a degree of interest for him she had never felt before. Linton stood in a window and watched her as she went, nor did his eye quit the graceful form till it disappeared in the covering of the trees. "Yes," said he to himself, "I have struck the right chord at last! She neither is to be dazzled by the splendour, nor excited by the ambitions of the great world. The key to the mystery of her nature lies in the very fact of her position in life—the indignant struggle against a condition she feels beneath her;—she can sympathise with this. She is just the very girl, too, to awaken Laura's jealousy, so brilliantly handsome, so much of elegance in mien and deportment. Ay! the game will win. I may stake all upon it. Who is that?" said he, starting suddenly, as a door banged behind him, and he saw Tom Keane, who had been a silent listener to his soliloquy. Linton well knew that shrewd as the man was, the words could have conveyed little or nothing to his intelligence, and carelessly asked what had the post brought.

"A heap of letters, yer Honer," said he, laying the heavily-loaded bag on the table. "I never see as many come to the town afore."

As Linton unlocked the bag and emptied its contents before him, his face suddenly grew dark and angry, for none of the letters, as he turned them over, were for himself; they were all addressed Roland Cashel, Esq., and marked "private." At last he saw one with his own name, and motioning to Keane to leave him undisturbed, he sat down to read it. It came from his correspondent Mr. Phillis, and was of the briefest.

"Sir,—All has gone wrong.—R. C. sailed last night on a yachting excursion with Lord and Lady K., some say for Wales, others for the Isle of Wight. The truth I cannot ascertain. The persons invited to Tubbermore

are all preparing to set out, but eagerly asking where C. is to be found. There has been something like a breach at K.'s, and I fancy it is about Lady Kilgoff's going in the yacht, which, although seeming accident, must have been planned previously. If you had been here the matter might have taken another turn, as C. appears very tired of K.'s agency, and the difficulty of obtaining money from him.

"I have received a few lines from C., dated from 'the Harbour,' to order a 'fourgon' to be got ready; but I shall pretend not to have received the note, and leave this, if you desire it, for Tubbermore on hearing from you.

"Yours, in duty,

"R. PHILLIS."

Linton crushed the note passionately in his fingers, and with a cheek almost purple, and swollen knotted veins about the forehead and temples, he hastily walked to and fro in the apartment. "So, madam," said he, "is this, then, the reason of your compliance? Was this the source of that yielding to my wishes, that induced you to come here? And to dare this towards *me!*" A fiendish laugh burst from him as he said, "Silly fool, so long as you played fair, the advantage was all on your own side. Try to cheat, and you'll see who's the victor! And that cub, too," added he, with a hoarse passion, "who ventures a rivalry with me! Hate has an inspiration that never deceives; from the first moment I saw him, I felt that for him."

"You say you wanted the masons, Sir," said Keane, opening the door, where he had been endeavouring, but ineffectually, to catch the clue of Linton's words.

"Yes, let them come here," said he, with his ordinary composure. "You are to break a door there," said he, as the men entered, "and I wish to have it done with all speed. You'll work all night, and be doubly paid." As he spoke, he sauntered out to muse over the late tidings he had received, and plan within himself the coming campaign.

Thus loitering and reflecting, time slipped by and evening drew near.

"We must have a light here," said one of the masons. "This room is never very bright, and now it is almost dark as night. But what have we here?" And at the moment his hammer sent forth a ringing sound as it it had struck upon metal.

"What can it be?" said the other; "it seems like a plate of iron."

Linton now drew nigh, as he overheard these words, and stationing himself at a small window, beheld the two men as they laboured to detach what seemed a heavy stone in the wall.

"It's not a plate of iron, but a box," cried one.

"Hush," said the other, cautioning silence; "if it's money there's in it, let us consider a bit where we'll hide it."

"It sounds empty, anyhow," said the first, as the metal rang clearly out under the hammer. Meanwhile Linton stood overwhelmed at the strange connexion between the dream and the discovery. "It is a box, and here's the key fastened to it by a chain," cried the former speaker. He had scarcely succeeded in removing the box from the wall, when Linton was standing, unseen and noiseless, behind him.

"We'll share it fair, whatever it is," said the second.

"Of course," said the other. "Let us see what there is to share." And so he threw back the lid, and beheld, to his great dismay, nothing but a roll of parchment fastened by a strap of what had once been red leather, but which crumbled away as he touched it.

"'Tis Latin," said the first, who seemed the more intelligent of the two, after a vain effort to decipher the heavily engrossed line at the top.

"You are right," said Linton; and the two men started with terror on seeing him so near. "It is Latin, boys; it was the custom of the monks to bury their prayers in that way once, and to beg, whoever might discover the document, to say so many masses for the writer's soul; and Protestant though I be, I do not think badly of the practice. Let us find out the name." And thus saying, he took up the roll and perused it steadily. For a long time the evening darkness—the difficulty of the letters—and the style of the record, impeded him, but as he read on, the colour came and went in his cheek, his hand trembled with agitation, and had there been light enough to have noted him well, even the workmen must have perceived the excitement under which he laboured.

"Yes," said he, at last, "it is exactly as I said. It was written by a monk. This was an old convent once, and Father Angelo asks our prayers for his eternal repose, which assuredly he shall have, heretic that I am! Here, boys, here's a pound note for you; Father Rush will tell you how to use it for the best. Get a light and go on with your work, and if you don't like to spend the money in masses, say nothing about the box, and I'll not betray your secret."

A dry laugh and a significant leer of the eye showed that he had accurately read his hearers' inmost thoughts, and Linton sat down as if to await their return; but no sooner had they left the spot than he hastened with all speed to the inn, to con over his newly discovered treasure, and satisfy himself as to its importance and authenticity.

Drawing close the curtains of his windows, and locking the door of his room, like one who would be alone, he again opened the casket, and took out the scroll. With bent-down head and steady gaze he perused it from

end to end, and then sat with riveted eyes fixed upon the signature and massive seal which were appended to the foot of the document. "That this should have been revealed in a dream," said he, at length, "is almost enough to shake one's faith in the whole! Am I myself awake, and is it real what I see before me?" He walked the room with uncertain steps—then opened wide the window—then closed it again—once more took up the paper and studied it. In fact, it was clear to see that a sceptical nature, the very habit of doubt, had indisposed him to believe in even that which his very senses corroborated.

"What would I give for some lawyer's craft at this moment!" said he, as the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, and his clenched hands were clasped together in strong emotion,—"what would I give for the keenness that could pierce through every line of this, and see it free of flaw—ay, that is the point! And then, Master Roland,"—here his voice grew full and round,—"and then we should see who is the master and who the dependent, if with a word—with one word—I could unmake you, and from the insolence of your sudden wealth bring you down once more to your fitting station! Never did Fortune stand by me like this! Let me, however, not lose the game from over-strength. Caution is needed here. Before Corrigan shall know himself the rightful owner of Tubbermore, he must be satisfied to see Tom Linton his son-in-law. A glorious hit that deals vengeance on every hand. Ay, my Lady, we shall acquit our debt to *you* also!" From the heat of overwhelming passion he again turned to the document which lay open on the table. "What if it were only a copy? But this is scarce possible. The signatures look real, and the seal cannot be counterfeit. Whom could I trust to inspect it? With whom dare I place it for a day, or even an hour? No! I'll never suffer it out of my own keeping! I know not if the power to strike is not the very acme of revenge!"

As he walked the room in deepest agitation he chanced for an instant to catch a glimpse of Tubbermore, which, in the bright light of a newly-risen moon, could be seen above the trees.

"So then it may chance that I have not expended my labour in vain, and that this same house may be yet my own. Mine!" cried he, in ecstasy—"mine those swelling woods—that princely park—the high position which wealth bestows, and the power that I could speedily accomplish in political life. There may be many who have more ambition to strive for—I'll swear there are few men living have more grudges to pay off."

And with this speech, uttered in an accent of withering hate and scorn, he again returned to gaze at the open parchment.

The document, surmounted by the royal arms and engrossed in a stiff old-

fashioned hand, was a free pardon accorded by His Majesty George the Second to Miles Hardress Corrigan, and a full and unqualified restoration to his once forfeited estates.

Certain legal formalities were also enjoined to be taken, and certain oaths to be made, as the recognition of this act of his Sovereign's grace.

Such was the important document on which now he gazed, reading and re-reading it, till every word became riveted on his memory.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE GUESTS BEGIN TO ARRIVE.

Hark, they come! they come!

An unusual bustle and commotion in the little inn awoke Linton early on the following morning. These were caused by the arrival of a host of cooks, coachmen, grooms, footmen, and scullions, with a due proportion of the other sex, all engaged in London, and despatched—"as per order"—to form the household of Tubbermore.

As Linton proceeded with his dressing, he overheard the multifarious complaints and lamentations of this town-reared population over the dirt and destitution of their newly-adopted land; criticisms which, as they scrupled not to detail aloud, evoked rejoinders not a whit more complimentary to the Saxon, the hostess of the Goat—being an energetic disciple of that great authority who has pronounced both the land and its people as the paragons of creation—leading the van of the attack, and certainly making up for any deficiencies in her cause by the force of her eloquence.

"Arrah! who wanted ye here at all?" said she, addressing the circle, stunned into silence by her volubility. "Who axed ye? Was it to plaze us, or to fill yer pockets with the goold of ould Ireland, ye kem? Oh, murther! murther—isn't it the sin and the shame to think how the craytures is eatin' us up! Faix! maybe ye'll be sorry enough for it yet. There's more than one amongst you would like to be safe home again, afore long! A set of lazy thieves, no less. The heavens be my bed, but I never thought I'd see the day they'd be bringing a 'Naygur' to Ireland to teach us music!"

This singular apostrophe, which seemed to fill the measure of her woe, so far attracted Linton's curiosity to comprehend it, that he opened the window and looked out, and at once discovered, by the direction of the eyes

of the circle, the object of the sarcasm. He was a well-built man, of a dark swarthy complexion and immense beard and moustache, who sat on a stone bench before the door, occupied in arranging the strings of his guitar. The air of unmoved tranquillity showed that he did not suspect himself to be the butt of any sarcasm, and he pursued his task with a composure that vouched for his ignorance of the language.

"Who is our friend?" said Linton, addressing the coachman, and pointing to the musician.

"We calls him Robinson Crusoe, Sir," replied the other; "we took him up on the road from Limerick. We never see'd him afore."

"So, then, he doesn't belong to our force. I really had begun to fear that Mr. Gunter had pushed enlistment too far."

Meanwhile the stranger, attracted by the voice, looked up, and seeing Linton, immediately removed his cap, with an air of quiet courtesy that was not lost upon the shrewd observer to whom it was tendered.

"You are a sailor, I perceive?" said Tom, as he walked out in front of the inn. The other shook his head dubiously.

"I was asking," said Linton, changing his language to French, "if you had been a sailor?"

"Yes, Sir," replied he, again removing his cap, "a sailor from Trieste."

"And how came you here?"

"Our vessel was lost off the Blasquets, Sir, on Wednesday night. We were bound for Bristol with fruit from Sicily, and caught in a gale; we struck, and all were lost, except myself and another, now in hospital in the large city yonder."

"Were you a petty officer, or a common seaman?" said Linton, who had been scanning with keen eye the well-knit frame and graceful ease of the speaker.

"A common sailor, Sir," rejoined he, modestly.

"And how comes it that you are a musician, friend?" asked Linton, shrewdly.

"Every one is in my country, Sir—at least, with such humble skill as I possess."

"What good fortune it was to have saved your guitar from shipwreck," rejoined Linton, with an incredulous twinkle of his grey eyes.

"I did not do so, Sir," said the sailor, who either did not, or would not notice the sarcasm. "My good friends here"—pointing to the servants—"bought this for me in the last town we came through."

Linton again fixed his eyes upon him; it was evident that he was hesitating between belief and an habitual sense of distrust, that extended to everything and everybody. At last he said:

"And what led you hither, my friend?"

"Chance," said the man, shrugging his shoulders. "I could have no preferences for one road over another—all were strange—all unknown to me. I hoped, with the aid of my guitar, to get some clothes once more together, and then to find some vessel bound for the Adriatic."

"What can you do besides that?" said Linton, "for it strikes me a fellow with thews and sinews like yours was scarcely intended to thrum catgut."

"I can do most things where a steady eye, and a strong hand, and a quick foot are needed. I've been a hunter in the forests of Dalmatia—herded the half-wild cattle on the Campagna at Rome—sailed a felucca in the worst Levanters of the Gulf—and to swim in a high sea, or to ride an unbroken horse, I'll yield to but one man living."

"And who may he be?" said Linton, aroused at the southern enthusiasm so suddenly excited.

"A countryman of mine," said the sailor, sententiously; "his name is not known to you."

"How sad such gifts as these should have so little recompense in our days," said Linton, with an affected sincerity. "There was a time, in your own country, too, when a fellow like yourself would not have had long to seek for a patron."

The Italian's cheek grew deeper in its flush, and his dark eyes seemed almost to kindle beneath the shaggy brows; then correcting, as it seemed, the passionate impulse, he said: "Ay, true enough, Sir; there were many who had the gold to squander, who had not the hand to strike, and, as you say, fellows like me were high in the market."

"And no great hardship in it, either," said Linton. "There is a Justice surer and quicker than the Law, which I, for one, think right well of."

Either not following the import of the speech, or not caring to concur in it, the Italian did not reply.

"I have a notion that we may find out some employment for you here," said Linton. "What name are we to call you?"

"Giovanni," said the sailor, after a moment's hesitation, which did not escape the shrewdness of his questioner.

"Giovanni be it," said Linton, easily; "as good as another."

"Just so," rejoined the Italian, with a hardihood that seemed to sit easily upon him.

"I think, friend," said Linton, drawing nearer to him—and, although the foreign language in which he spoke effectually prevented the others from understanding what passed, instantly his voice dropped into a lower and more confidential tone—"I think, friend, we shall soon understand each other well. You are in want of a protector; I may yet stand in need of an attached and zealous fellow. I read people quickly, and it seems to me

that we are well met. Stay here, then; we shall soon have a large company arriving, and I'll try and find out some exercise for your abilities."

The Italian's dark eyes flashed and twinkled as though his subtle nature had already enlarged upon the shadowy suggestions of the other, and he made a significant gesture of assent.

"Remember, now, in whose service you are," said Linton, taking out his purse, and seeking among its contents for the precise piece of coin he wanted—"remember, that I am not the master here, but one who has to the full as much power, and that I can prove a strong friend, and, some say, a very dangerous enemy. Here is the earnest of our bargain," said he, handing him a guinea in gold; "from this hour I count upon you."

The Italian nodded twice, and pocketing the money with a cool audacity that told that such contracts were easily comprehended by him, touched his cap, and sauntered away, as though to follow out some path of his own choosing. Linton looked after him for a moment, but the next his attention was taken off by seeing that Mr. Corrigan and his granddaughter were advancing hastily towards him.

"So you have really accepted my suggestion," said Mary, with a flush of pleasure on her cheek; "the door has been opened, and the vista is exactly as my dream revealed it."

"In all save the chief ingredient," replied Linton, laughing; "we want the monk and the casket."

"Hush!" said she, cautiously; "grandpapa is a firm believer in all dreams and visions, and would not hear them spoken of irreverently."

"Assuredly, I never was less in the mind to do so," replied Linton, with a degree of earnestness that made Mary smile, little suspecting at the time to what his speech owed its fervour.

"We've come to take a last look at the 'Hall,' Mr. Linton," said the old man. Tom Keane tells me that your gay company will soon arrive; indeed, rumour says, that some have already reached Limerick, and will be here to-morrow."

"This is more than I knew of," said Linton; "but here comes the redoubted Tom himself, and with a full letter-bag, too." Hastily unlocking the leather sack, Tom Linton emptied its contents upon a grassy bench, where the party seated themselves to learn the news. "There are no secrets here," said Linton, tossing over the letters, with nearly all of whose handwriting he was familiar; "help me, Miss Leicester, I beg, to get through my task. Pray break some of the seals, and tell us who our dear friends are whose presence is so soon to charm and enliven us. And will you, too, Sir, bear your part?" Thus invited, old Mr. Corrigan put on his spectacles, and slowly prepared to assist in the labour.

"That's the Dean's hand, Miss Leicester—the Dean of Drumcondera. I hope he's not coming; I'm sure he was never invited."

"He regrets he cannot be with you this week, but will certainly come next, and take the liberty of presenting his distinguished friend, the Hofrath von Dunnersleben, Professor of Oriental Literature at Hochenkanperhausen."

"This is painting the lily with a vengeance; 'colour on colour' is bad heraldry, but what shall we say of the taste that brings 'Bore upon bore?'"

"Mrs. Leicester White has prevailed upon Mr. Howle to defer his departure from Ireland——"

"This is too bad," interrupted Linton. What fortune have you, Sir? I hope better tidings than Miss Leicester."

"This is a strange kind of scrawl enough," said the old man; "it runs thus: 'Dear Tom, we are starting for your wild regions this evening—two drags and a mail phaeton. I have sent Gipsy and the white fetlocked colt by Hericks, and will bring Tom Edwards with me. The mare looks well, but fleshy; you must look to it that we haven't heavy ground——'"

"Oh, I know who that's from," said Linton, hastily taking the letter from Corrigan's hand; "it's Lord Charles Frobisher—a silly fellow, that never thinks of anything but horse-racing and training."

"He would seem to speculate on something of the kind here," said Corrigan; "at least, it looks very like premeditation this sending off grooms and racers."

"He does so everywhere he goes," said Linton, affecting to laugh; "a surgeon would no more travel without his lancets, than Charley without some chance of a 'match;' but what's this?

"'Dear Mr. Cashel,—I and my little girl are already "en route" for your hospitable castle, too happy to assist in the celebration of your house warming——'

"Oh, that's Meek," said Linton. "And now for this rugged little hand here.

"'Lady Janet and Sir Andrew MacFarline——'"

"Strange style,—the lady first," interposed Miss Leicester.

"She is always so," said Linton, continuing the perusal—"'will reach Tubbermore by Tuesday, and have only to request that their apartments may not have a north aspect, as Lady J. has still a heavy cold hanging over her. Sir A.'s man, Flint, will arrange the rooms himself, and, with Mr. Cashel's permission, give directions about double doors—if there be none.

"'Sir A. has taken the liberty of mentioning to Gordon that the sherry is far too hot and acrid, and hopes Mr. Cashel will pardon his having ordered some dozens of "Amontillado" for trial. Lady J. asks, as a favour, that plants and flowers may be banished from the house during her brief stay, Dr. Grimes positively forbidding all herbaceous odours; and if the cook could make the "cuisine" particularly simple, it would also oblige her, as Dr. G. says she ought not to be exposed to the irritation of tempting viands, even to see them at table.

"'Lady J. hopes that the society will be cheerful without dissipation, and gay without debauch; above all, she stipulates for early hours, and trusts that by eleven, at latest, the house will have retired to rest. Lady Janet has no objection to meeting any one Mr. Cashel may honour with his invitation, but leaves it to Mr. C.'s discretion not to abuse this liberality Were she to particularise, she should merely suggest, that the Kennyfecks, except perhaps the elder girl, are odious—Mrs. White, a perfect horror—the Meeks, something too atrocious—and that rather than meet the Kilgoffs and their set, Lady J. would almost prefer to relinquish all her much-anticipated pleasure. Mr. Linton can be, and very often is, gentlemanlike and amusing, but "Lintonism," as occasionally practised, is intolerable.

"'Lady Janet has ventured on these remarks, far less for her own convenience, than in the discharge of what she feels to be a duty to a very young and inexperienced man, whose unsuspecting nature will inevitably expose him to the very insidious attacks of selfishness, cunning, and to that species of dictation that sooner or later ends in debasing and degrading him who permits himself to be its subject.

"'JANET MACFARLINE.'"

"What a chaste specimen of disinterestedness her Ladyship's own letter," said Mary. "Is she a near relative, or a very old friend of Mr. Cashel's family?"

"Neither; a mere acquaintance, undistinguished by anything like even a passing preference."

"She is a Lady Janet," interposed old Corrigan, "and it is surprising what charms of influence pertain to those segments of great families, as they descend a scale in society, and live among the untitled of the world; besides that, whatever they want in power, they 'take out' in pretension, and it does quite as well."

"She is 'mauvaise langue,'" said Linton; "and there are few qualities obtain such sway in society. But who comes here in such haste? It is Tom Keane. Well, Tom, what has happened—is the Hall on fire?"

"No, Sir; but the company's comin' rowlin' in as fast as 'pays' down

the big avenue, and into the coort; there was three coaches all together, and I see two more near the gate."

"Then we shall leave you to your cares of host," said Corrigan, rising; "but don't forget that when affairs of state permit, we shall be delighted to see you at the cottage."

"Oh, by all means, Mr. Linton. I have acquired the most intense curiosity to hear about your fine company, and their doings—pray compassionate my inquisitiveness."

"But will you not join us sometimes?" said Linton; "can I not persuade you to make part of our little company? for I trust we shall be able to have some society worth showing you."

The old man shook his head and made a gesture of refusal.

"Nay," said he, "I am so unfitted for such scenes, and so grown out of the world's ways, that I am going to play hermit, and be churlish enough to lock the wicket that leads down to the cottage during the stay of your visitors—not against *you*, however. You'll always find the key at the foot of the holly-tree."

"Thanks—I'll not not forget it," said Linton; and he took a cordial leave of his friends, and returned to the house, wondering as he went who were the punctual guests whose coming had anticipated his expectations.

He was not long in doubt upon this point, as he perceived Mr. Phillis, who, standing on the terrace before the chief entrance, was giving directions to the people about, in a tone of no small authority.

"What, Phillis! has your master arrived?" cried Linton, in astonishment.

"Oh, Mr. Linton!" cried the other, obsequiously, as hat in hand he made his approaches, "there has been such a business since I wrote——"

"Is he here? Is he come?" asked Linton, impatiently.

"No, Sir, not yet; nor can he arrive before to-morrow evening. You received my letter, I suppose, about the result of the yachting party and Lady Kilgoff?"

"No! I know not one word about it," said Linton, with a firmness that showed how well he could repress any trace of anxiety or excitement. "Come this way, out of the hearing of these people, and tell me everything from the beginning."

Phillis obeyed, and walked along beside him, eagerly narrating the whole story of Cashel's departure, to the moment when the yacht foundered, and the party were shipwrecked off the coast of Wexford.

"Well, go on," said Linton, as the other came to a full stop. "What then?"

"A few lines came from Mr. Cashel, Sir, with orders for certain things

to be sent down to a little village on the coast, and directions for me to proceed at once to Tubbermore and await his arrival."

Linton did not speak for some minutes, and seemed totally occupied with his own reflections, when by hazard he caught the words "her Ladyship doing exactly as she pleases——"

"With whom?" asked he, sternly.

"With Mr. Cashel, Sir; for it seems that notwithstanding all the terror and danger of the late mishap, Mr. Sickleton has been despatched to Cowes to purchase the *Queen of the Harem*, Lord Wellingham's new yacht, and this at Lady Kilgoff's special instigation. Mr. Sickleton slept one night at our house in town, and I took a look at his papers; there was nothing of any consequence, however, except a memorandum about 'Charts for the Mediterranean,' which looks suspicious."

"I thought, Phillis, I had warned you about the Kilgoff intimacy. I thought I had impressed you with the necessity of keeping them from him."

"So you had, Sir; and, to the very utmost of my power, I did so; but here was a mere accident that foiled all my care and watchfulness."

"As accidents ever do," muttered Linton, with suppressed passion. "The game of Life, like every other game, is less to skill than chance! Well, when can they be here?"

"To-morrow afternoon, Sir, if not delayed by something unforeseen; though this is not at all unlikely, seeing the difficulty of getting posters. There are from thirty to forty horses engaged at every stage."

"Whom have we here?" cried Linton, as a large travelling-carriage suddenly swept round the drive, and entered the court.

"Sir Andrew MacFarline's baggage, Sir; I passed them at the last change. One would say, from the preparations, that they speculate on a somewhat lengthy visit. What rooms are we to assign them, Sir?"

"The four that look north over the billiard-room and the hall; they are the coldest and the most cheerless in the house. Your master will occupy the apartments now mine; see, here is a plan of the house; Lord and Lady Kilgoff have 4, 5, and 6. These that are not marked you may distribute now you will. My quarters are those two, beyond the library."

Linton was here interrupted by the advance of a tall, stiff-looking old fellow, who, carrying his hand to his hat in military guise, stood straight before him, saying, in a very broad accent, "The Gen'ral's mon, Sir, an't please ye."

"Well, friend, and what then?" replied Linton, half testily.

"I've my Leddy's orders, Sir, to tak' up a good position, and a warm ane, in the hoos younder, and if it's no askin' too much, I'd like to speer the premises first."

"Mr. Phillis, look after this, if you please," said Linton, turning away, "and remember my directions."

"Come with me, friend," said Phillis; "your mistress, I suppose, does not like cold apartments?"

"Be ma saul, if she finds them so, she'll mak' the rest of the hoos over warm for the others," said he, with a sardonic grin, that left small doubt of his sincere conviction.

"And your master?" said Phillis, in that interrogatory tone which invites a confidence.

"The Gen'ral's too auld a soldier no to respec deescepline," said he, dryly.

"Oh, that's it, Sanders."

"Ma name's Bob Flint, and no Saunders—Gunner and Driver i' the Roya. Artillery," said the other, drawing himself up proudly; "an' if we are to be mair acquaint, it's just as well ye'd mind that same."

As Bob Flint possessed that indescribable something which would seem, by an instinct, to save its owner from impertinences, Mr. Phillis did not venture upon any renewed familiarity, but led the way into the house in silence.

"That's a bra' cookin' place ye've got yonder," said Bob, as he stopped for a second at the door of the great kitchen, where already the cooks were busied in the various preparations; "but I'm no so certain my Leddy wad like to see a bra' giggot scooped out in tha' fashion just to mak' room for a wheen black potatoes inside o' it;"—the operation alluded to so sarcastically being the stuffing of a shoulder of mutton with truffles, in Provençal mode.

"I suppose her Ladyship will be satisfied with criticising what comes to table," said Phillis, "without descending to the kitchen to make objections."

"If she does, then," said Flint, "she's mair ceevil to ye here than she was in the last hoos we spent a fortnight, whar she discharged twa maids for no making the beds as she taw'd them, forbye getting the coachman turned off because the carriage horses held their tails ower high for her fancy."

"We'll scarce put up with that here," said Phillis, with offended dignity

"I dinna ken," said Bob, thoughtfully; "she made her ain nephew carry a pound o' dips from the chandler's, just, as she said, to scratch his pride a bit. I'd ha' ye mind a wee hoo ye please her fancy. Ye're a bonnie mon, but she'll think leetle aboot sending ye packing."

Mr. Phillis did not deign a reply to this speech, but led the way to the suite destined for her Ladyship's accommodation.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### HOW THE VISITORS FARED.

They come—they come!—HAROLD.

LINTON passed the greater part of the night in letter-writing. Combinations were thickening around him, and it demanded all the watchful activity he could command to prevent himself being overtaken by events. To a confidential lawyer he submitted a case respecting Corrigan's title, but, so hypothetically and with such reserve, that it betrayed no knowledge of his secret—for he trusted no man. Mary Leicester's manuscript was his next care, and this he entrusted to a former acquaintance connected with the French press, entreating his influence to obtain it the honour of publication, and, instead of remuneration, asking for some flattering acknowledgment of its merits. His last occupation was to write his address to the constituency of his borough, where high-sounding phrases and generous professions took the place of any awkward avowals of political opinion. This finished, and wearied by the long-sustained exertion, he threw himself on his bed. His head, however, was far too deeply engaged to permit of sleep. The plot was thickening rapidly—events, whose course he hoped to shape at his leisure, were hurrying on, and although few men could summon to their aid more of cold calculation in a moment of difficulty, his wonted calm was now disturbed by one circumstance—this being, as he called it to himself—Laura's treachery.—No men bear breaches of faith so ill as they who practise them with the world. To most persons the yacht voyage would have seemed, too, a chance occurrence, where an accidental intimacy was formed, to wane and die out with the circumstance that created it. Not so did *he* regard it. He read a prearranged plan in every step she had taken—he saw in her game the woman's vanity to wield an influence over one for whom so many contended—he knew, too, how in the great world an "*éclat*" can always cover an "indiscretion"—and that, in the society of that metropolis to which she aspired, the reputation of chaperoning the rich Roland Cashel would be of incalculable service.

If Linton had often foiled deeper snares, here, a deep personal wrong disturbed his powers of judgment, and irritated him beyond all calm prudential thoughts. Revenge upon her, the only one he had ever cared for was now his uppermost thought, and left little place for any other.

Wearied and worn out, he fell asleep at last, but only to be suddenly awakened by the rattling of wheels and the quick tramp of horses on the gravel beneath his window. The one absorbing idea pervading his mind, he started up, muttering, "*She* is here." As he opened his window and looked down, he at once perceived his mistake—Mrs. Kennyfeck's well-known voice was heard, giving directions about her luggage—and Linton closed the casement, half relieved and half disappointed.

For a brief space the house seemed astir. Mrs. Kennyfeck made her way along the corridor in a mingled commentary on the handsome decorations of the mansion and Mr. Kennyfeck's stupidity, who had put Archbold's "Criminal Practice" into her bag instead of Debrett's "Peerage," while Linton could overhear a little quizzing conversation between the daughters, wherein the elder reproached her sister for not having the politeness to bid them "welcome." The slight commotion gradually subsided, and all became still, but only for a brief space. Again the same sound of crashing wheels was heard, and once more Linton flung open his window and peered out into the darkness. It was now raining tremendously, and the wind howling in long and dreary cadences.

"What a climate!" exclaimed a voice Linton knew to be Downie Meek's. His plaint ran thus:

"I often said they should pension off the Irish Secretary after three years, as they do the Chief Justice of Gambia."

"It will make the ground very heavy for running, I fear," said the deep full tone of a speaker who assisted a lady to alight.

"How you are always thinking of the turf, Lord Charles!" said she, as he rather carried than aided her to the shelter of the porch.

Linton did not wait for the reply, but shut the window, and again lay down.

In that half-waking state, where sleep and fatigue contest the ground with watchfulness, Linton continued to hear the sound of several arrivals, and the indistinct impressions became commingled till all were lost in heavy slumber. So is it. Childhood itself, in all its guileless freedom, enjoys no sounder, deeper sleep than he whose head is full of wily schemes and subtle plots, when once exhausted nature gains the victory.

So profound was that dreamless state in which he lay, that he was never once aware that the door by which his chamber communicated with the adjoining one, had been opened, while a select committee were debating about the disposition of the furniture, in total ignorance that he made part of it.

"Why couldn't Sir Andrew take that small room, and leave this for me?

I like an alcove vastly," said Lady Janet, as, candle in hand, she took a survey of the chamber.

"Yes, my Leddy," responded Flint, who, loaded with cloaks, mantles, and shawls, looked like an ambulating wardrobe.

"You can make him a kind of camp-bed there; he'll do very well."

"Yes, my Leddy."

"And don't suffer that impertinent Mr. Phillis to poke his head in here and interfere with our arrangements. These appear to me to be the best rooms here, and I'll take them."

"Yes, my Leddy."

"Where's Sir Andrew?"

"He's takin' a wee drap warm, my Leddy, in the butler's room; he was ower wat in the 'dickey' behind."

"It rained smartly, but I'm sure the country wanted it," dryly observed Lady Janet.—"Well, Sir, *you* here again?" This sharp interrogatory was addressed to Mr. Phillis, who, after a vain search for her Ladyship over half the house, at length discovered her.

"You are not aware, my Lady," said he, in a tone of obsequious deference, that nearly cost him an apoplexy, "that these rooms are reserved for my master."

"Well, Sir; and am I to understand that a guest's accommodation is a matter of less importance than a valet's caprice? for as Mr. Cashel never was here himself, and consequently never could have made a choice, I believe I am not wrong in the source of the selection."

"It was Mr. Linton, my Lady, who made the arrangement."

"And who is Mr. Linton, Sir, who ventures to give orders here?—I ask you, who is Mr. Linton?" As there was something excessively puzzling to Mr. Phillis in this brief interrogatory, and as Lady Janet perceived as much, she repeated the phrase in a still louder and more authoritative tone, till, in the fulness of the accents, they fell upon the ears of him who, if not best able to give the answer, was, at least, most interested in its nature.

He started, and sat up; and although, from the position of his bed in a deep alcove he was himself screened from observation, the others were palpable enough to his eyes.

"Yes," cried Lady Janet, for the third time—"I ask, who is Mr. Linton?"

"Upon my life, your Ladyship has almost made me doubt if there be such a person," said Tom, protruding his head through the curtains.

"I vow he's in the bed yonder!" said Lady Janet, starting back, "Flint, I think you are really too bad; this is all your doing, or yours. Sir," turning to Phillis with a face of anger.

"Yes, my Leddy, it's a' his meddlin'."

"Eh, Leddy Janet, what's this?" said Sir Andrew, suddenly joining the party, after a very dangerous excursion along dark corridors and back stairs.

"We've strayed into Mr. Linton's room, I find," said she, gathering up various small articles she had on entering thrown on the table. "I must only reserve my apologies for a more fitting time and place, and wish him good night."

"I've even dune something o' the same wi' Mrs. Kannyfack," said Sir Andrew. "She was in bed, though, and so I made my retreat undiscovered."

"I regret, Lady Janet," said Linton, politely, "that my present toilet does not permit me to show you to your apartment, but if you will allow Mr. Phillis——"

"Dinna get up, man," broke in Sir Andrew, as he half pushed the invading party out of the door; "we'll find it vara weel, I've na doubt." And in a confused hubbub of excuses and grumblings they withdrew, leaving Linton once more to court slumber, if he could.

"I beg pardon, Sir," said Phillis, popping in his head the minute after, "but Mr. Downie Meek has taken the rooms you meant for Lady Janet; they've pillaged all the chambers at either side for easy-chairs and cushions to——"

"With all my heart; let them settle the question between them, or leave it to arbitration. Shut the door, pray."

"Mrs. White, too, and a large party are in the library, and I don't know where to show them into."

"Anywhere but here, Phillis. Good night; there's a good man, good night."

"They're all asking for you, Sir; just tell me what to say."

"Merely that I have passed a shocking night, and request I may not be disturbed till late in the afternoon."

Phillis retired with a groan, and soon a confused hum of many voices could be heard along the corridor, in every accent of irritation and remonstrance. Self-reproaches on the mistaken and abused confidence which had led the visitors to journey so many miles to "such a place;" mutual condolences over misfortune; abuse of the whole establishment, and "that insufferable puppy the valet," in particular, went round, till at last, like a storm that had spent its fury, a lull succeeded; one by one the grumblers slipped away, and just as day was breaking the house was buried in the soundest sleep.

About an hour later, when the fresh-risen sun was glistening and glit-

tering among the leaves, lightly tipped with the hoar-frost of an autumnal morning, a handsomely-appointed travelling-carriage, with four posters, drove rapidly up to the door, and an active-looking figure springing from the box, applied himself to the bell with a vigorous hand, and the next minute, flinging open the carriage-door, said, "Welcome—at last, I am able to say —welcome to Tubbermore."

A graceful person, wrapped in a large shawl, emerged, and, leaning on his arm, entered the house; but in a moment he returned to assist another and a far more helpless traveller, an old and feeble man, who suffered himself to be carried, rather than walked, into the hall.

"This is Tubbermore, my Lord," said the lady, bending down, and with a hand slightly touching his shoulder, seeming to awake his attention.

"Yes—thank you—perfectly well," said he, in a low soft voice, while a smile of courteous but vacant meaning stole over his sickly features.

"Not over-fatigued, my Lord?" said Roland, kindly.

"No, Sir—we saw the 'Lightship' quite near us."

"Still thinking of that dreadful night," said her Ladyship, as she arranged two braids of her fair brown hair more becomingly on her forehead; and then turning to a very comely personage, who performed a series of curtseys, like minute guns, at intervals, added, "If you please, then we'll retire to our apartment. Your housekeeper, I suppose, Mr. Cashel?"

"I conclude so," said Roland; "but I am equally a stranger here with yourself."

"Mrs. Moss, at your service, Sir," said the housekeeper, with another curtsey.

"Mrs. Moss, then," said Roland, in an under tone, "I have only to remark that Lord and Lady Kilgoff must want for nothing here."

"I understand, Sir," said Mrs. Moss; and whether the words, or the look that accompanied them, should bear the blame, but they certainly made Cashel look half angry, half ashamed.

"Then good night—or good morrow, I believe it should be," said Lady Kilgoff. "I'm sure, in charity, we should not keep you from your bed a minute longer. You had a severe night outside."

"Good night—good night, my Lord," said Cashel; and the handsome form of the lady moved proudly on, while the servant assisted the poor decrepid husband slowly after.

Roland looked after them for an instant, and whether from some curiosity to see the possessions which called him master, or that he felt indisposed to sleep, he passed out into the lawn and stood some minutes gazing at the strange and somewhat incongruous pile before him.

Perhaps something of disappointment mingled with his thoughts—per-

haps it was only that strange revulsion which succeeds to all long-excited expectation, when the moment of satisfying it has come, and speculation is at an end for ever—but he was turning away, in half sadness, when he caught sight of a hand waving to him a salute from one of the windows. He had just time to answer the gesture, when the shutter was closed. There was one other saw the motion, and noted well the chamber from whence it came. Linton, awoke by the arrival of the carriage, had watched every step that followed, and now sat, with half-drawn curtains, eagerly marking everything that might minister to his jealous anger.

As for Cashel, he sauntered on into the wood, his mind wandering on themes separated by nearly half the world from where his steps were straying.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### ROLAND'S INTRODUCTION TO MR. CORRIGAN.

> And while the scene around them smiled,
> With pleasant talk the way beguiled.
>
> HAILE'S RAMBLES.

As Roland Cashel strolled along alone, he could not divest himself of a certain feeling of disappointment, that, up to the present, at least, all his wealth had so little contributed to realise those illusions he had so often fancied. The plots, the wiles, and cunning schemes by which he had been surrounded, were gradually revealing themselves to his senses, and he was rapidly nearing the fatal "bourne" which separates credulity from distrust.

If we have passed over the events which succeeded the loss of the yacht with some appearance of scant ceremony to our reader, it is because, though in themselves not totally devoid of interest, they formed a species of episode, which only in one respect bore reference to the current of our story. It is not necessary, no more than it would be gratifying, to us to inquire with what precise intentions Lady Kilgoff had sought to distinguish Roland by marks of preference. Enough, if we say that he was neither puppy enough to ascribe the feeling to anything but a caprice, nor was he sufficiently hackneyed in the world's ways to suspect it could mean more.

That he was flattered by the notice, and fascinated by the charms of a very lovely and agreeable woman, whose dependence upon him each day

increasing drew closer the ties of intimacy, is neither strange nor uncommon, no more than that she, shrewdly remarking the bounds of respectful deference by which he ever governed his acquaintance, should use greater freedoms and less restricted familiarity with him, than had he been one of those fashionable young men about town with whom the repute of a conquest would be a triumph.

It is very difficult to say on what terms they lived in each other's society. It were easier, perhaps, to describe it by negatives, and say that assuredly if it were not love, the feeling between them was just as little that which subsists between brother and sister. There was an almost unbounded confidence—an unlimited trust—much asking of advice, and, in fact, as many of my readers will say, fully as much peril as need be.

From her Cashel first learned to see the stratagems and schemes by which his daily life was beset. Too proud to bestow more than a mere passing allusion to the Kennyfecks, she directed the whole force of her attack upon that far more dangerous group in whose society Roland had lately lived. For a time she abstained altogether from even a chance reference to Linton; but at length, as their intimacy ripened, she avowed her fear of him in all its fulness. When men will build up the edifice of distrust, it is wonderful with what ingenuity they will gather all the scattered materials of doubt, and with what skill arrange and combine them! A hundred little circumstances of a suspicious nature now rushed to Roland's memory, and his own conscience corroborated the history she drew of the possible mode by which Linton acquired an influence over him.

That Linton had been the "evil genius" of many, Cashel had often heard before, but always from the lips of men; and it is astonishing, whether the source be pride, or something less stubborn, but the warning which we reject so cavalierly from our fellows, comes with a wondrous force of conviction from the gentler sex.

For the heavy sums he had lost at play—for all the wasteful outlay of his money, Cashel cared little; but for the humiliating sense of being a "dupe" and "a tool," his outraged pride suffered deeply; and when Lady Kilgoff drew a picture, half real, half imaginary, of the game which his subtle associate was playing, Roland could scarce restrain himself from openly declaring a rupture, and, if need be, a quarrel with him.

It needed all her persuasions to oppose this course; and, indeed, if she had not made use of one unanswerable argument, could she have succeeded. This was the inevitable injury Linton could inflict upon *her*, by ascribing the breach to her influence. It would be easy enough, from such materials as late events suggested, to compose a history that would ruin her. Lady Kilgoff's lamentable imbecility, the result of that fatal night of danger—

Cashel's assiduous care of her—her own most natural dependence upon him—all these, touched on with a woman's tact and delicacy, she urged, and at last obtained his pledge that he would leave to time and opportunity the mode of terminating an intimacy he had begun to think of with abhorrence.

If there be certain minds to whom the very air they breathe is doubt, there are others to whom distrust is absolute misery. Of these latter Cashel was one. Nature had made him frank and free-spoken, and the circumstances of his early life had encouraged the habit. To nourish grudge would have been as repulsive to his sense of honour as it would be opposed to all the habits of his buccaneering life. To settle a dispute with the sword was invariably the appeal among his old comrades, and such arbitraments are those which certainly leave the fewest traces of lingering malice behind them. To cherish and store up a secret wrong, and wait in patience for the day of reckoning, had something of the Indian about it that, in Roland's eyes, augmented its atrocity.

Oppressed with thoughts like these, and associating every vexation he suffered as in some way connected with that wealth whose possession he fancied was to satisfy every wish, and every ambition, he sauntered on, little disposed to derive pleasure from the presence of those external objects which fortune had made his own.

"When I was poor," thought he, "I had warm and attached friends, ready to exult in my successes, and sympathise with me in my sorrows. If I had enemies, they were brave fellows, as willing to defend their cause with the sword as myself. None flattered or frowned on him who was richer than the rest. No subtle schemes lay in wait for him whose unsuspecting frankness exposed him to deception; we were 'bons camarades,' at least," said he, aloud, "and from what I have seen of the great world, I've lived to prize the distinction."

From this reverie he was suddenly recalled by observing, directly in front of him, an elderly gentleman, who, in a stooping posture, seemed to seek for something among the dry leaves and branches beside a low wicket.

"This is the first fruit of our gay neighbourhood," said the old man, testily, as he poked the dead leaves with his cane; "we're lucky if they leave us without more serious inconvenience."

"Can I assist you in your search?—have you lost something?" said Cashel, approaching.

"There is a key—the key of the wicket, hid somewhere hereabouts, young man," said the other, who, scarcely bestowing a look upon Roland, continued his investigation as busily as before.

Cashel, undaunted by the somewhat ungracious reception, now aided him in his search, while the other continued: "I've known this path for nigh

forty years, and never remember this wicket to have been locked before. But so it is. My old friend is afraid of the invasion of this noisy neighbourhood, and has taken to lock and key to keep them out. The key he promised to hide at the foot of this tree."

"And here it is," said Cashel, as he unlocked the wicket and flung it wide.

"Many thanks for your help, but you have a better reward than my gratitude, in eyes some five-and-thirty years younger," said the old man, with the same half-testy voice as before. "Perhaps you'd like to see the grounds here, yourself: come along. The place is small, but far better kept than the great demesne, I assure you; just as many an humble household is more orderly than many a proud retinue."

Roland was rather pleased by the quaint oddity of his new companion, of whom he thought, but could not remember where, he had seen the features before.

"You are a stranger in these parts, I conclude?" said the old man.

"Yes. I only arrived here about an hour ago, and have seen nothing save the path from the Hall to this spot."

"There's little more worth the seeing on yonder side of the paling, Sir. A great bleak expanse, with stunted trees and a tasteless mansion, full of, I take it, very dubious company; but perhaps you are one of them?"

"I confess as much," said Roland, laughing; "but as I have not seen them, don't be afraid I'll take up the cudgels for my associates."

"Labour lost if you did," said the other, bluntly. "I only know of them what the newspapers tell us, but their names are enough."

"Are they all in the same category, then?" asked Cashel, smiling.

"Pigeons or hawks—dupes or swindlers—an ugly alternative to choose from."

"You are candid, certainly, friend," said Cashel, half angrily; "but don't you fancy there is rather too much of frankness in saying this to one who has already said he is of the party?"

"Just as he likes to take it," said the old man, bluntly. "The wise man takes warning where the fool takes umbrage. There's a fine view for you—see! there's a glorious bit of landscape," cried he, enthusiastically, as they came to an opening of the wood and beheld the wide expanse of Lough Derry, with its dotted islands and ruined tower.

Roland stood still, silently gazing on the scene, whose beauty was heightened by all the strong effect of light and shade.

"I see you have an eye for landscape," said the old man, as he watched the expression of Cashel's features.

"I've been a lover of scenery in lands where the pursuit was well rewarded," said Roland, thoughtfully.

"That you may; but never in a country where the contemplation called for more thought than in this before you. See, yonder, where the lazy smoke rises heavily from the mountain side, high up there amid the fern and the tall heath, that, is a human dwelling—there, lives some cottier a life of poverty as uncheered and unpitied as though he made no part of the great family of man. For miles and miles of that dreary mountain some small speck may be traced where men live and grow old and die out, unthought of and uncared for by all beside. This misery would seem at its full, if now and then seasons of sickness did not show how fever and ague can augment the sad calamities of daily life. There are men, ay, and old men, too, who never have seen bread for years, I say, save when some gamekeeper has broken it to feed the greyhounds in a coursing party."

"And whose the fault of all this?" said Cashel, eagerly.

"It is easy to see, Sir," said the other, "that you are no landed proprietor, for not only you had not asked the question, but you had not shown so much emotion when putting it. So it is," muttered he to himself. "It is so, ever. They, have most sympathy with the poor who have least the power to help them."

"But I ask again, whose the fault of such a system?" cried Cashel.

"Ask your host yonder, and you'll soon have an answer to your question. You'll hear enough of landlords' calamities—wrecking tenantry—people in barbarism—irreclaimably bad—sunk in crime, black in ingratitude. Ask the peasant, and he'll tell you of clearances—whole families turned out to starve and die in the highways—the iron pressure of the agent in the dreary season of famine and fever. Ask the priest, and he will say, it is the galling tyranny of the 'rich man's church' establishment consuming the substance, but restoring nothing to the people. Ask the rector, and he'll prove it is Popery—the debasing slavery of the very blackest of all superstitions, and so on; each throws upon another the load which he refuses to bear his share of, and the end is, we have a reckless gentry and a ruined people; all the embittering hatred of a controversy, and little of the active working of Christian charity. Good-by, Sir. I ask pardon for inflicting something like a sermon upon you. Good-by."

"And yet," said Cashel, "you have only made me anxious to hear more from you. May I ask if we are likely to meet again, and where?"

"If you should chance to be sick during your visit here, and send for the doctor, it's likely they'll fetch me, as there is no other here."

Cashel started, for he at once remembered that the speaker was Dr. Tiernay, the friend of his tenant Mr. Corrigan; as the Doctor did not re-

cognise him, however, Roland resolved to keep his secret as long as he could.

"There, Sir," said Cashel, "I see some friends accosting you. I'll say good-by."

"Too late to do so now," said the other, half sulkily. "Mr. Corrigan would feel it a slight if you turned back, when his table was spread for a meal. You'll have to breakfast here."

Before Roland could answer, Mr. Corrigan came forward from beneath the porch, and, with a hand to each, bid them welcome.

"I was telling this gentleman," said Tiernay, "that he is too far within your boundaries for retreat. He was about to turn back."

"Nay, nay," said the old man, smiling; "an old fellow like you or me may do a churlish thing, but a young man's nature is fresher and warmer. I tell you, Tiernay, you're quite wrong, this gentleman will breakfast here."

"With pleasure," said Cashel, cordially, and entered the cottage.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### ROLAND "HEARS SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE."

**Ay, Sir, I saw him 'hind the arras.**

SIR GAVIN.

CASHEL would have devoted more attention to the tasteful arrangement of the drawing-room into which they were ushered, if he had not been struck with the handsome and graceful form of a young girl, who from time to time passed before his eyes in an inner chamber, engaged in the office of preparing breakfast, and whom he at once recognised as the granddaughter of whom Linton wrote.

"We were talking of poor Ireland," said Tiernay, "and all her sorrows."

"I'll engage you were," cried Corrigan, laughing, "and I'll swear you did not make a mournful topic a whit less gloomy by your way of treating it; and that's what he calls entertaining a stranger, Sir; like a bankrupt merchant amusing a party by a sight of his schedule. Now, I'll wager a trifle my young friend would rather hear where a brace of cocks was to be found, or the sight of a neat grass country to ride over after the fox-hounds —and I can do both one and the other. But here comes Mary. My granddaughter, Miss Leicester, Sir."

Mary saluted the stranger with an easy gracefulness, and she shook the Doctor's hand cordially.

"You are a little late, Doctor," said she, as she led the way into the breakfast-room.

"That was in part owing to that rogue Keane, who has taken to locking the gate of the avenue, by way of seeming regular, and some one else has done the same with the wicket here. Now, as for fifty years back all the cows of the country have strayed through the one, and all the beggars through the other, I don't know what's to come of it."

"I suppose the great house is filling?" said Mary, to withdraw him from a grumbling theme; "we heard the noise of several arrivals this morning early."

"This gentleman can inform you best upon all that," said Tiernay; "he himself is one of the company."

"But I am ignorant of everything," said Cashel; "I only arrived here a little after daybreak, and not caring to sleep, I strolled out, when my good fortune threw me into your way."

"Your friends are likely to have fine weather, and I am glad of it," said Corrigan. "This country, pretty enough in sunshine, looks bleak and dreary when the sky is louring; but I've no doubt *you'd* rather have

A southerly wind, and a cloudy sky,

as the song says, than the brightest morning that ever welcomed a lark. Are you fond of hunting?"

"I like every kind of sport, where horse, or gun, or hound can enter; but I've seen most of such pastimes in distant countries, where the game is different from here, and the character of the people just as unlike."

"I have hunted the wild boar myself," said old Corrigan, proudly, "in the royal forests at Meudon and Fontainebleau."

"I speak of the antelope and the jaguar—the dark leopard of Guiana, or the brown bison of the Andes."

"That is, indeed, a manly pastime!" said Mary, enthusiastically.

"It is so," said Cashel, warmed by the encouragement of her remark; "more even for the endurance and persevering energy it demands than for its peril. The long days of toil in search of game, the nights of waking watchfulness, and then the strange characters and adventures among which you are thrown, all make up a kind of life so unlike the daily world."

"There is, as you say, something highly exciting in all that," said Corrigan; "but to my thinking, hunting is a royal pastime, and loses half of its prestige when deprived of the pomp and circumstance of its courtly following. When I think of the old forest echoing to the tantarara of the

*cor de chasse*, the scarlet-clad 'piqueurs' with lance and cutlass, the train of courtiers mounted on their high-mettled steeds, displaying all the address of the *salon*, and all the skill of the chase, to him who was the centre of the group—the King himself——"

"Are you not forgetting the fairest part of the pageant, Papa?" broke in Mary.

"No, my dear, that group usually waited to join us as we returned. Then, when the '*Retour de la Chasse*' rang out from every horn, and the whole wood re-echoed with the triumphant sounds, then might be seen the Queen and her ladies advancing to meet us. I think I see her yet, the fair-haired Queen, the noblest and most beautiful in all that lovely circle, mounted on her spotted Arabian, who bore himself proudly beneath his precious burden. Ah! too truly did Burke say 'the Age of Chivalry was past,' or never had such sorrows gone unavenged. Young gentleman, I know not whether you have already conceived strong opinions upon politics, and whether you incline to one or other of the great parties that divide the kingdom, but one thing I would beseech you—be a Monarchist. There is a steadfast perseverance in clinging to the legitimate Sovereign. Like the very observance of truth itself, shake the conviction once, and there is no limit to scepticism."

"Humph!" muttered Tiernay, half aloud. "Considering how royalty treated your ancestors, your ardour in their favour might be cooled a little."

"What's Tiernay saying?" said the old man.

"Grumbling, as usual, Papa," said Mary, laughing, and not willing to repeat the remark.

"Trying to give a man a bias in politics," said the Doctor, sarcastically, "is absurd, except you accompany the advice with a place. A man's political opinions are born with him, and he has as much to do with the choice of his own Christian name, as whether he'll be a Whig or a Tory."

"Never mind him, Sir," said Corrigan to Cashel; "one might travesty the well-known epigram, and say of him that he never said a kind thing, nor did a rude one, in his life."

"The greater fool he, then," muttered Tiernay, "for the world likes him best who does the exact opposite; and here comes one to illustrate my theory. There, I see him yonder; so I'll step into the library and look over the newspaper."

"He cannot endure a very agreeable neighbour of ours—a Mr. Linton," said Corrigan, as the Doctor retired; "and makes so little secret of his dislike, that I am always glad when they avoid a meeting."

"Mr. Linton is certainly more generous," said Mary, "for he enjoys the Doctor's eccentricity without taking offence at his rude humour."

"Good breeding can be almost a virtue," said the old man, with a smile.

"It has this disadvantage, however," said Cashel; "it deceives men, who, like myself, have little knowledge of life, to expect far more from politeness than it is ever meant to imply; just as on the Lima shore, when we carried off a gold Madonna, we were never satisfied if we missed the diamond eyes of the image."

The old man and his granddaughter almost started at the strange illustration; but their attention was now called off by the approach of Linton, whom they met as he reached the porch.

"Come here a moment, Sir," said the Doctor, addressing Cashel from the little boudoir; "here are some weapons of very old date found among the ruins beside where we stand." And Roland had just time to quit the breakfast-room before Linton entered it.

"The menagerie fills fast," said Linton, as he advanced gaily into the apartment; "some of our principal lions have come; more are expected; and all the small cages have got their occupants."

"I am dying of curiosity," said Mary. "Tell us everything about everybody. Who have arrived?"

"We have everything of a household save the host. He is absent; and, stranger than all, no one knows where."

"How singular!" exclaimed Corrigan.

"Is it not? He arrived this morning with the Kilgoffs, and has not since been heard of. I left his amiable guests at the breakfast-table conversing on his absence, and endeavouring to account for it under every variety of 'shocking accident' one reads of in the morning papers. The more delicately minded were even discussing, in whispers, how long it would be decent to stay in a house if the owner committed suicide."

"This is too shocking," said Mary.

"And yet there are men who do these things! Talleyrand it was, I believe, who said that the fellow who shot himself showed a great want of 'savoir vivre.' Well, to come back: we have the Kilgoffs, whom I have not seen as yet; the Meeks, father and daughter; the MacFarlines; Mrs. White and her familiar, a distinguished author; the whole Kennyfeck tribe; Frobisher; some five or six cavalry subalterns; and a large mob of strange-looking people of both sexes, making up what in racing slang is called the 'ruck' of the party."

"Will it not tax your ingenuity, Mr. Linton, to amuse, or even to preserve concord among such a heterogeneous multitude?" said Mary.

"I shall amuse them by keeping them at feud with each other, and, when they weary of that, let them have a grand attack of the whole line upon their worthy host and entertainer. Indeed, already signs of rebel-

.ious ingratitude have displayed themselves. You must know that there has been a kind of petty scandal going about respecting Lady Kilgoff and Mr. Cashel."

"My dear Sir," said Mr. Corrigan, gravely, but with much courtesy, "when my granddaughter asked you for the latest news of your gay household, she did so in all the inconsiderate ignorance her habits and age may warrant; but neither she nor I cared to hear more of your guests than they ought to have reported of them, or should be repeated to the ears of a young lady."

"I accept the rebuke with less pain," said Linton, smiling easily, "because it is, in part at least, unmerited. If you had permitted me to continue, you should have seen as much." Then, turning to Miss Leicester, he added: "You spoke of amusement, and you'll acknowledge we are not idle. Lord Charles Frobisher is already marking out a race-course; Meek is exploring the political leaning of the borough; the Kennyfecks are trying their voices together in every room of the house; and Lady Janet has every 'casserole' in the kitchen engaged in the preparation of various vegetable abominations which she and Sir Andrew take before breakfast; and what with the taking down and putting up of beds, the tuning of pianofortes, sol-fa-ing here, bells ringing there—cracking of tandem whips—firing off percussion caps—screaming to grooms out of window, and slamming of doors, Babel was a scene of peaceful retirement in comparison. As this, too, is but the beginning, pray forgive me if my visits here be more frequent and enduring than ever."

"Your picture of the company is certainly not flattering," said Mary.

"Up to their merits, notwithstanding; but how could it be otherwise? To make a house pleasant, to bring agreeable people together—to assemble those particles whose aggregate solidifies into that compact mass called society—is far harder than is generally believed; vulgar folk attempt it by getting some celebrity to visit them. But what a failure that is! One lion will no more make a party than one swallow a summer. New people, like our friend Cashel, try it by asking everybody. They hope, by firing a heavy charge, that some of the shot will hit. Another mistake! He little knows how many jealousies, rivalries, and small animosities are now at breakfast together at his house, and how ready they are, when no other game offers, to make him the object of all their spite and scandal."

"But why?" said Mary. "Is not his hospitality as princely as it is generously offered; can they cavil with anything in either the reception itself or the manner of it?"

"As that part of the entertainment entered into *my* functions, Miss Leicester, I should say, certainly not. The whole has been well 'got up.'

I can answer for everything save Cashel himself; as Curran said, 'I can elevate all save the host.' He is irreclaimably 'en arrière'—half dandy half Delaware, affecting the man of fashion, but, at heart, a prairie hunter."

"Hold, Sir!" cried Cashel, entering suddenly, his face crimson with passion. "By what right do you presume to speak of me in this wise?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" broke out Linton, as he fell into a chair in a burst of admirably feigned laughter. "I told you, Miss Leicester, how it would be; did I not say I should unearth the fox? Ah! Roland, confess it; you were completely taken in."

Cashel stared around for an explanation, and in the astonishment of each countenance he fancied he read a condemnation of his conduct. All his impulses were quick as thought, and so he blushed deeply for his passionate outbreak, as he said:

"I ask pardon of you, Sir, and this lady, for my unseemly anger. This gentleman certainly deserves no apology from me. Confound it, Master Tom, but assuredly you don't fire blank cartridge to startle your game."

"No use to tickle lions with straws," said Linton; and the insinuated flattery succeeded.

"Let me now bid you welcome to my cottage, Mr. Cashel," said Corrigan; "although this incognito visit was an accident, I feel happy to see you here."

"Thank you, thank you," replied Cashel. "I shall be even more grateful still if you permit me to join in Linton's petition, and occasionally escape from the noisy festivities of the Hall and come here."

While Corrigan and Cashel continued to interchange mutual assurances of esteem and regard, Linton walked to a window with Miss Leicester.

"We had no conception that our guest was Mr. Cashel," said Mary; "he met Dr. Tiernay accidentally in the park, and came along with him to breakfast."

"And did not the Doctor remember him?" asked Linton, shrewdly.

"Oh no; he may probably recollect something of having met him before, three weeks hence, but he is so absent!"

"I thought Roland would have taken the quizzing better," said Linton, thoughtfully. "There's no knowing any man, or—woman either. *You* perceived what I was at, certainly."

"No, indeed. I was as much deceived as Mr. Cashel. I thought, to be sure, that you were unusually severe, but I never suspected the object."

"How droll. Well, I am a better actor than I fancied," said Linton laughing; then added, in a lower tone, "not that the lesson should be lost upon him; for, in sober earnest, there was much truth in it."

"We were greatly pleased with him," said Mary; "and now, knowing

who he is, and what temptations such a young man has to over-estimate himself, are even more struck by his unassuming quietude."

Linton only smiled, but it was a smile of most compassionate pity.

"I conclude that you mean to show yourself to your company, then, Mr. Cashel?" said he, turning suddenly about.

"I'm ready," said Roland. "I'd go, however, with an easier conscience, if Mr. Corrigan would only promise me to come and see us there sometimes."

"I'm a very old fellow, Mr. Cashel, and have almost outlived the habits of society; but if any one's invitation shall bring me beyond these walls, it shall be yours."

"I must be content with that," said Roland, as he shook the proffered hand; and then, with a cordial farewell to Miss Leicester, took Linton's arm, and retired.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### MISS JEMIMA MEEK.

If you show him in Hyde Park—Lauk! how they will stare!
Though a very smart figure in Bloomsbury-square.

THE SNOB.

CASHEL'S was not a nature to dwell upon a grievance, and he would have, at once and for ever, forgotten the late scene with Linton if it were not coupled in his mind with suspicions derived from various different sources. This made him silent and reserved as he walked along, and so palpably inattentive to all his companion's efforts at agreeability, that Linton at last said, "Well, Cashel, if you can dispense with sleep, you certainly seem to take the compensation in dreaming. Here have I been retailing for you the choicest bits of gossip and small-talk, not only without the slightest gratitude, but even without common attention on your part!"

"Very true," said Cashel; "the reproach is quite just, and no man can be more agreeable at the expense of his friends than yourself."

"Still harping on my daughter—eh?" cried Linton. "I never thought you the man to misconstrue a jest, but if you really are offended with my folly——"

"If I really were offended," said Cashel, almost sternly, "I should not leave it to be inferred from my manner."

"That I am sure of," cried Linton, assuming an air of frankness; "and now, since all that silly affair is forgotten——"

"I did not say so much," interrupted Cashel. "I cannot forget it, and that is the very reason I am annoyed with myself, with you, and with all the world."

"Pooh! nonsense, man. You were not used to be so thin-skinned. Let us talk of something else. Here are all our gay friends assembled—how are we to occupy and amuse them?"

Cashel made no reply, but walked on, seemingly lost in thought.

"By the way," said Linton, "you've told me nothing of your adventures. Haven't you had something very like a shipwreck?"

"The yacht is lost," said Cashel, dryly.

"Actually lost!" echoed the other, with well-assumed astonishment. "How fortunate not to have had the Kennyfeck party on board, as I believe you expected."

"I had the Kilgoffs, however," rejoined Roland.

"The Kilgoffs! you amaze me. How did my Lord ever consent to trust his most precious self on such an enterprise?"

Cashel shrugged his shoulders, without uttering a word in reply.

"But come, do condescend to be a little more communicative. How, and when, and where did the mishap occur?"

"She foundered on the southern coast some time after midnight on the 15th. The crew and passengers escaped by the boats, and the craft went to pieces."

"And the Kilgoffs, how did they behave in the moment of peril?"

"My Lord seemed insensible to all around; Lady Kilgoff, with a dignified courage quite admirable."

"Indeed!" said Linton, slowly, while he fixed his eyes on Cashel's face, where an expression of increased animation now displayed itself.

"She has a fine generous nature," continued Cashel, not heeding the remark. "It is one of the saddest things to think of, how she has been mated."

"She is a Peeress," said Linton, curtly.

"And what of that? Do your aristocratic distinctions close the heart against every high and noble sentiment, or can they compensate for the absence of every tie that attaches one to life? Is not some poor Indian girl who follows her wild Ranchero husband through the dark valleys of Guiana, not only a happier, but a better wife than your proud Peeress?"

Linton shook his head and smiled, but did not reply.

"I see how my old prejudices shock you," said Cashel. "I only grieve

to think how many of them have left me, for I am sick—sick at heart—of your gay and polished world. I am weary of its double-dealing, and tired of its gilded falsehood. Since I have been a rich man, I have seen nothing but the servile flattery of sycophancy, or the insidious snares of deeper iniquity. There is no equality for one like myself. The high-born wealthy would treat me as a *parvenu*, the vulgar rich only reflect back my own errors in broader deformity. I have known no other use of wealth than to squander it to please others; I have played high, and lost deeply; I have purchased a hundred things simply because some others wished to sell them; I have entertained and sat among my company, waiting to catch and resent the covert insult that men pass upon such as me; and will you tell me—you, who know the world well—that such a life repays one?"

"Now, let me write the credit side of the account," said Linton, laughing, and affecting a manner of easy jocularity. "You are young, healthy and high-spirited, with courage for anything, and more money than even recklessness can get rid of. You are the most popular fellow among men, and the greatest favourite of the other sex, going. You get credit for everything you do, and a hundred others that men know you could, but have not done. You have warm, attached friends; I can answer for one, at least, who'll lay down his life for you." He paused, expecting some recognition, but Cashel made no sign, and he resumed. "You have only to propose some object to your ambition, whether it be rank, place, or a high alliance, to feel that you are a favourite with fortune."

"And is it by knowing beforehand that one is sure to win that gambling fascinates?" said Roland, slowly.

"If you only knew how the dark presage of failure deters the unlucky man, you'd scarce ask the question!" rejoined Linton, with an accent of sorrow, by which he hoped to awaken sympathy. The stroke failed, however, for Cashel took no notice of it.

"There goes one whose philosophy of life is simple enough," said Linton, as he stopped at a break in the holly hedge, beside which they were walking, and pointed to Lord Charles, who, mounted on a blood-horse, was leading the way for a lady, equally well carried, over some sporting-looking fences.

"I say, Jim," cried Frobisher, "let her go a little free at them; she's always too hot when you hold her back."

"You don't know, perhaps, that Jim is the lady," whispered Linton, and withdrawing for secrecy behind the cover of the hedge. "Jim," continued Linton, "is the familiar for Jemima. She's Meek's daughter, and the wildest romp——"

"By Jove! how well she cleared it. Here she comes back again," cried Cashel, in all the excitement of a favourite sport.

"That's all very pretty, Jim," called out Frobisher, "but let me observe it's a very Brummagem style of thing after all. I want you to ride up to your fence with your mare in hand, touch her lightly on the flank, and pop her over quietly."

"She is too fiery for all that," said the girl, as she held in the mettlesome animal, and endeavoured to calm her by patting her neck.

"How gracefully she sits her saddle," muttered Cashel; and the praise might have been forgiven from even a less ardent admirer of equestrianism, for she was a young, fresh-looking girl, with large hazel eyes, and a profusion of bright auburn hair, which floated and flaunted in every graceful wave around her neck and shoulders. She possessed, besides, that inestimable advantage as a rider which perfect fearlessness supplies, and seemed to be inspired with every eager impulse of the bounding animal beneath her.

As Cashel continued to look, she had taken the mare a canter round a large grass field, and was evidently endeavouring, by a light hand and a soothing, caressing voice, to calm down her temper; stooping, as she went, in the saddle to pat the animal's shoulder, and almost bending her own auburn curls to the counter.

"She is perfect!" cried Roland, in a very ecstasy; "See that, Linton! Mark how she sways herself in her saddle."

"That comes of wearing no stays," said Linton, dryly, as he proceeded to light a cigar.

"Now she's at it. Here she comes!" cried Cashel, almost breathless with anxiety; for the mare, chafed by the delay, no sooner was turned towards the fence once more, than she stretched out and dashed wildly at it.

It was a moment of intense interest, for the speed was far too great to clear a high leap with safety; the fear was, however, but momentary, for, with a tremendous bound, the mare cleared the fence, and, after a couple of minutes' cantering, stood with heaving flanks and swelling nostril beside the other horse.

"You see my misfortune, I suppose?" said the girl, addressing Frobisher.

"No. She's not cut about the legs?" said he, as he bent down in his saddle and took a most searching survey of the animal.

"No, the hack is all right. But don't you perceive that bit of blue cloth flaunting yonder on the hedge?—that is part of my habit. See what a tremendous rent is here; I declare, Charley, it is scarcely decent." And to

illustrate the remark, she wheeled her horse round so as to show the fringed and jagged end of her riding-habit, beneath which a very finely turned ankle and foot were now seen.

"Then why don't you wear trousers, like everybody else?" said Frobisher, gruffly, and scarce bestowing even a passing glance at the well-arched instep.

"Because I never get time to dress like any one else. You order me out like one of your Newmarket boys," replied she, pettishly.

"By Jove! I wish any one of them had got your hand."

"To say nothing of the foot, Charley," said she, roguishly, and endeavouring to arrange her torn drapery to the best advantage.

"No. That may do to astonish our friend Cashel, and make 'my Lady' jealous. By the way, Jim, I don't see why you shouldn't 'enter for the plate' as well as the Kennyfeck girls."

"I like *you* better, Charley," said she, curveting her horse and passaging him alternately from side to side.

"This is the second time to-day I have played the eavesdropper unconsciously," said Roland, in a whisper, "and with the proverbial fortune of the listener in both cases." And with these words he moved on, leaving Linton still standing opposite the opening of the hedge.

Cashel had not advanced many paces beneath the shelter of the tall hollies, when Frobisher accidentally caught sight of Linton, and called out, "Ha, Tom—found you at last! Where have you been hiding the whole morning—you that should, at least, represent our host here?"

Linton muttered something, while, by a gesture, he endeavoured to caution Frobisher, and apprise him of Cashel's vicinity. The fretful motion of his horse, however, prevented his seeing the signal, and he resumed:

"One of my people tells me that Cashel came with the Kilgoffs this morning. I say, Tom, you'll have to look sharp in that quarter. Soh, there—quiet, Gustave—gently, man."

"He's too fat, I think. You always have your cattle too heavy," said Linton, hoping to change the topic.

"He carries flesh well. But what is it I had to tell you? Oh, I remember now—about the Yacht Club. I have just got a letter from Derwent, in which he says the thing is impossible. His remark is more true than courteous. He says, 'It's all very well in such a place as Ireland to know such people, but that it won't do in England; besides that, if Cashel does wish to get among men of the world, he ought to join some light cavalry corps for a year or so, and stand plucking by Stanhope, and Dash-

field, and the rest of them. They'll bring him out if he'll only pay handsomely.' Soh, there, man—do be quiet, will you? The end of it is, that Derwent will not put his name up. I must say it's a disappointment to me, but, as a younger brother, I have only to smile and submit."

While Lord Charles was retailing this piece of information in no very measured tone, and only interrupted by the occasional impatience of his horse, Linton's eyes were fixed on Cashel, who, at the first mention of his own name, increased his speed, so as to suggest the fond hope that some, at least, of this unwelcome intelligence might have escaped him.

"You'll have to break the thing to him, Tom," resumed Lord Charles. "You know him better than any of us, and how the matter can be best touched upon."

"Not the slightest necessity for that, *now*," said Linton, with a low, deliberate voice.

"Why so?"

"Because you have just done so yourself. If you had only paid the least attention to my signal, you'd have seen that Cashel was only a few yards in front of me during the entire of your agreeable revelations."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Frobisher, as his head dropped forward in overwhelming confusion. "What is to be done?"

"Rather difficult to say, if he heard all," said Linton, coolly.

"You'd say it was a quiz, Tom. *You'd* pretend that you saw him all the while, and only did the thing for joke's sake—eh?"

"Possibly enough *I* might," replied Linton; "but *you* couldn't."

"How very awkward, to be sure!" exclaimed Frobisher. "I say, Jim, I wish you'd make up to Cashel a bit, and get us out of this scrape. There's Tom ready to aid and abet you, if only to take him out of the Kilgoffs' way."

"There never was a more propitious moment, Miss Meek," said Linton, passing through the hedge, and approaching close to her. "He's a great prize—the best estate in Ireland."

"The nicest stable of horses in the whole country," echoed Frobisher.

"A good-looking fellow, too; only wanting a little training to make presentable anywhere."

"That white barb, with the flea-bitten flank, would carry you to perfection, Jim."

"He'll be a Peer one of these days, if he is only patient enough not to commit himself in politics."

"And such a hunting-country for *you*," said Frobisher, in ecstasy.

"I tell you I don't care for him; I never did," said the girl, as a flush of half-angry meaning coloured her almost childish features.

"But don't you care to be mistress of fifteen thousand a year, and the finest stud in Ireland?"

"Mayhap a Countess," said Linton, quietly. "Your papa would soon manage that."

"I'd rather be mistress of myself, and this brown mare, 'Joan,' here, that's all I know; and I'll have nothing to do with any of your plots and schemes," said she, in a voice whose utterance was that of emotion.

"That's it," said Frobisher, in a low tone to Linton, "there's no getting them, at that age, with a particle of brains."

"They make up surprisingly for it afterwards," replied Linton, dryly.

"So you'll not consent, Jim?" said Frobisher, in a half-coaxing manner to the young girl, who, with averted head, sat in mingled sorrow and displeasure. "Well, don't be pettish about it; I'm sure I thought it very generous in me, considering——"

She looked round at this moment, and her large eyes were bent upon him with a look which their very tears made passionately meaning.

"Considering what a neat finger you have on a young horse," said he. And she turned abruptly away, and, as if to hide her emotion, spurred her mare into a bounding canter.

"Take care, Charley—take care what you're doing," said Linton, with a look of consummate shrewdness.

Frobisher looked after her for a minute or two, and then seemed to drop into a reverie, for he made no reply whatever.

"Let the matter stop where it is," said Linton, quietly, as if replying to some acknowledgment of the other; "let it stop there, I say, and one of these days, when she marries—as she unquestionably will do, through Papa Downie's means, somebody of influence—she'll be a steadfast, warm friend, never forgetting, nor ever wishing to forget, her childhood's companion. Go a little further, however, and you'll just have an equally determined enemy. I know a little of both sides of the question," added he, meditatively, "and it needs slight reflection which to prefer."

"How are you going to amuse us here, Mr. Linton?" said she, cantering up at this moment, "for it seems to *me*, as old Lord Kilgoff says, that we are like to have a very dull house. People are ordering dinner for their own small parties as unsocially as though they were at the Crown Inn, at Brighton."

"Yes, by-the-by," said Frobisher, "I want to ask you about that. Don't you think it were better to dash a little bit of 'communism' through your administration?"

"I intend to send in my resignation as Premier, now that the head of the State has arrived," said Linton, smiling dubiously.

"I perceive," said Frobisher, shrewdly, "you expect that the Government will go to pieces, if you leave it."

"The truth is, Charley," said he, dropping his voice to a low whisper, and leaning his hand on the horse's mane, "our friend Roland is rather too far in the category 'Savage' for long endurance. He grows capricious and self-opinionated. The thin plating comes off and shows the Buccaneer at every slight abrasion."

"What of that?" said Frobisher, languidly. "His book on Coutts's is unexceptionable. Come, Tom, you are the only man here who has a head for these things. Do exert yourself and set something a-going?"

"Well, what shall it be?" said he, gaily. "Shall we get the country people together, and have hack races?—shall we assemble the squires, and have a ball?—shall we start private theatricals? What says Miss Meek?"

"I vote for all three. Pray do, Mr. Linton, you, who are so clever, and can do everything, make us gay. If we only go on, as we have begun, the house will be like a model prison—on the separate and silent system."

"As you wish it," said Linton, bowing with assumed gallantry; "and now to work at once." So saying, he turned towards the house, the others riding at either side of him.

"What shall we do about Derwent's letter, Tom?" asked Frobisher.

"Never speak of it; the chances are that he has heard enough to satisfy the most gluttonous curiosity. Besides, he has lost his yacht." Here he dropped his voice to a low muttering, as he said, "And, may soon have a heavier loss!"

"Is his pace too fast?" said Frobisher, who caught up the meaning, although not the words.

Linton made no reply, for his thoughts were on another track; then suddenly catching himself, he said, "Come, and let us have a look at the stables. I've not seen our stud yet." And they turned off from the main approach and entered the wood once more.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### AN "UNLIMITED" MONARCHY.

And at last they find out to their greatest surprise,
That 'tis easier far to be "merry than wise."

BELL'S IMAGES.

"HERE is Mr. Cashel; here he is!" exclaimed a number of voices, as Roland, with a heart full of indignant anger, ascended the terrace upon which the great drawing-room opened, and at every window of which stood groups of his gay company. Cashel looked up, and beheld the crowd of pleased faces wreathed into smiles of gracious welcome, and then he suddenly remembered that it was *he* who had invited all that brilliant assemblage; that, for *him*, all those winning graces were assumed; and that *his* gloomy thoughts, and gloomier looks, were but a sorry reception to offer them.

With a bold effort, then, to shake off the load that oppressed him, he approached one of the windows, where Mrs. Kennyfeck and her two daughters were standing, with a considerable sprinkling of young dragoons around them.

"We are not to let you in, Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, from within. "There has been a vote of the House against your admission."

"Not, surely, to condemn me unheard," said Roland; "I might even say, unaccused."

"How so?" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck; "is not your present position your accusation? Why are you there, while we are here?"

"I went out for a walk, and lost myself in the woods."

"What does he say, my dear?" said Aunt Fanny, fearful of losing a word of the dialogue.

"That he lost himself, Madam," said one of the dragoons, dryly.

"So, indeed, we heard, Sir," said the maiden lady, piteously; "but I may say I foresaw it all."

"You are an old fool, and, worse still, every one sees it," whispered Mrs. Kennyfeck, in an accent that there was no mistaking, although only a whisper.

"We considered that you had abdicated, Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. White who having in vain waited for Roland to approach the window she occ

pied, was fain at last to join the others, "and we were debating on what form of Government to adopt—a Presidency, with Mr. Linton——"

"I see you are no Legitimist," slyly remarked Miss Kennyfeck. But the other went on,

"Or an open Democracy."

"I'm for that," said a jolly-looking cavalry Captain. "Pray, Miss Olivia Kennyfeck, vote for it too. I should like nothing so much as a little fraternising."

"I have a better suggestion than either," said Roland, gaily; "but you must admit me ere I make it."

"A device of the enemy," called out Mrs. White; "he wants to secure his own return to power."

"Nay, on honour," said he, solemnly; "I shall descend to the rank of the humblest citizen, if my advice be acceded to,—to the humblest subject of the realm."

"Ye maunna open the window. Leddy Janet has the rheumatics a' dandering aboot her back a' the morning," said Sir Andrew, approaching the group; and then turning to Cashel, said, "Glad to see ye, Sir; very glad, indeed; though, like Prince Charlie, you're on the wrang side o' the wa'."

"Dear me!" sighed Meek, lifting his eyes from the newspaper, and assuming that softly compassionate tone in which he always delivered the most common-place sentiments, "how shocking, to keep you out of your own house, and the air quite damp! Do pray be careful and change your clothes before you come in here." Then he finished in a whisper to Lady Janet, "One never gets through a country visit without a cold."

"Upon my word, I'll let him in," said Aunt Fanny, with a native richness of accent that made her fair nieces blush.

"At last!" said Cashel, as he entered the room, and proceeded to salute the company, with many of whom he had but the very slightest acquaintance—of some he did not even remember the names.

The genial warmth of his character soon compelled him to feel heartily what he had begun by feigning, and he bade them welcome with a cordiality that spread its kindly influence over all.

"I see," said he, after some minutes, "Lady Kilgoff has not joined us but her fatigue has been very great."

"They say my Lord's clean daft," said Sir Andrew.

"Oh no, Sir Andrew," rejoined Roland; "our misfortune has shaken his nerves a good deal, but a few days' rest and quiet will restore him."

"He was na ower wise at the best, puir man," sighed the veteran, as he moved away.

"Her Ladyship was quite a heroine—isn't that so?" said Lady Janet tartly.

"She held the rudder, or did something with the compass, I heard," simpered a young lady in long flaxen ringlets.

Cashel smiled, but made no answer.

"Oh dear," sighed Meek, "and there was a dog that swam—or was it you that swam ashore with a rope in your mouth?"

"I grieve to say, neither man nor dog performed the achievement."

"And it would appear that the horrid wretch—what's his name?" asked Mrs. White of her friend Howle.

"Whose name, Madam?"

"The man—the dreadful man, who planned it all. Sick—Sickamore—no, not Sickamore——"

"Sickleton, perhaps," said Cashel, strangely puzzled to make out what was coming.

"Yes, Sickleton had actually done the very same thing twice before, just to get possession of the rich plate and all the things on board."

"This is too bad," cried Cashel, indignantly; "really, Madam, you must pardon my warmth, if it even verges on rudeness; but the gentleman whose name you have associated with such iniquitous suspicions saved all our lives."

"That's what I like in him better than all," whispered Aunt Fanny to Olivia; "he stands by his friends like a trump."

"You have compelled me," resumed Cashel, "to speak of what really I had much rather forget; but I shall insist upon your patience now for a few minutes, simply to rectify any error which may prevail upon this affair."

With this brief prelude, Cashel commenced a narrative of the voyage from the evening of the departure from Kingstown to the moment of the vessel's sinking off the south coast.

If most of his auditors only listened as to an interesting anecdote, to others the story had a deeper meaning. The Kennyfecks were longing to learn how the excursion originated, and whether Lady Kilgoff's presence had been a prearranged plan, or a mere accidental occurrence.

"All's not lost yet, Livy," whispered Miss Kennyfeck in her sister's ear. "I give you joy;" while a significant nod from Aunt Fanny seemed to divine the sentiment and agree with it.

"And I suppose ye had na the vessel insured?" said Sir Andrew, at the close of the narrative; "what a sair thing to think o'."

"Oh dear, yes, to be sure!" ejaculated Meek, piteously; "and the cold, and the wetting, and the rest of it! for of course you must have met few comforts in that miserable fishing-hut."

"How picturesque it must have been," interposed Mrs. White; "and

what a pity you had no means of having a drawing made of it. The scene at the moment of the yacht striking—the despair-struck seamen——"

"Pardon me, Madam, for destroying even a particle of so ingenious a fancy; but the men evinced nothing of the kind; they behaved well, and with the calmest steadiness."

"It is scarcely too late yet," resumed the lady, unabashed; "if you would just describe it all carefully to Mr. Howle, he could make a sketch in oils one would swear was taken on the spot."

"Quite impossible—out of the question," said Howle, who was always ashamed at the absurdities which compromised himself, although keenly alive to those which involved his neighbours.

"We have heard much of Lady Kilgoff's courage and presence of mind," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, returning to a theme by which she calculated on exploring into Cashel's sentiments towards that lady. "Were they indeed so conspicuous?"

"Can you doubt it, Madam?" said Lady Janet, tartly; "she gave the most unequivocal proof of both—she remembered her husband!"

The tartness of this impertinent speech was infinitely increased by the voice and manner of the speaker, and a half-suppressed titter ran through the room, Cashel alone, of all, feeling annoyed and angry. Aunt Fanny, always less occupied with herself than her neighbours, quickly saw his irritation, and resolved to change a topic which more than once had verged on danger.

"And now, Mr. Cashel," said she, "let us not forget the pledge on which we admitted you."

"Quite right," exclaimed Roland; "I promised a suggestion; here it is——"

"Pardon me for interrupting," said Miss Kennyfeck: "but in what capacity do you make this suggestion? Are you still King, or have you abdicated?"

"Abdicated in all form," replied Roland, bowing with well-assumed humility; "as simple citizen I propose that we elect a 'Queen,' to rule despotically in all things; uncontrolled and irresponsible."

"Oh, delightful! admirable!" exclaimed a number of voices, among which all the men and the younger ladies might be heard: Lady Janet and Mrs. Kennyfeck, and a few others "of the senior service," as Mr. Linton would have called them, seeming to canvass the motion with more cautious reserve.

"As it is to be an elective monarchy, Sir," said Lady Janet, with a shrewd glance over all the possible candidates, "how do you propose the choice is to be made?"

"That is to be for after consideration," replied Roland; "we may have universal suffrage and the ballot."

"No, no, by Jove!" exclaimed Sir Harvey Upton; "we must not enter upon our new reign by a rebellion. Let only the men vote."

"How gallant!" said Miss Kennyfeck, sneeringly; while a chorus of "How unfair!" "How ungenerous!" went through the room.

"What say ye to the plan they hae wi' the Pope?" said Sir Andrew, grinning maliciously; "tak' the auldest o' the company."

This suggestion caused a laugh, in which certain parties did not join overheartily. Just at this moment the door opened, and Lord Kilgoff, leaning on the arm of two servants, entered. He was deathly pale, and seemed several years older; but his face had acquired something of its wonted expression; and it was with a sad, but courteous smile, he returned the salutations of the company.

"Glad to see you amongst us, my Lord," said Cashel, as he placed an arm-chair, and assisted the old man to his seat. "I have just been telling my friends that our country air and quiet will speedily restore you."

"Thank you very much, Sir," said he, taking Cashel's hand. "We are both greatly indebted to your kindness, nor can we indeed ever hope to repay it."

"Make him a receiver on the estate, then," whispered Lady Janet in Miss Kennyfeck's ear, "and he'll soon pay himself."

"Tell my Lord about our newly intended government, Mr. Cashel," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "I'm sure it will amuse him." And Cashel, more in obedience to the request than from any conviction of its prudence, proceeded to obey. One word only, however, seemed to fix itself on the old man's memory:

"Queen! Queen!" repeated he several times to himself. "Oh, indeed! You expect her Majesty will honour you with a visit, Sir?"

Cashel endeavoured to correct the misconception, but to no purpose; the feeble intelligence could not relinquish its grasp so easily, and he went on in a low muttering tone,

"Lady Kilgoff is the only Peeress here, Sir, remember that; you should speak to her about it, Mr. Cashel."

"I hope we are soon to have the pleasure of seeing Lady Kilgoff, my Lord," whispered Cashel, half to concur with, half to turn the course of conversation.

"She will be here presently," said he, somewhat stiffly, as if some unpleasant recollection was passing through his mind; and Cashel turned away to speak with the others, who eagerly awaited to resume the interrupted conversation.

"Your plan, Mr. Cashel; we are dying to hear it," cried one.

"Oh, by all means; how are we to elect the Queen?" said another.

"What say you to a lottery?" said he, "or something equally the upshot of chance. For instance, let the first lady who enters the room be Queen."

"Very good indeed," said Lady Janet, aloud; then added, in a whisper, "I see that old Mrs. Malone with her husband toddling up the avenue this instant."

"Olivia, my love," whispered Mrs. Kennyfeck to her daughter, "fetch me my work here, and don't be a moment away, child. He's so amusing!" And the young lady glided unseen from the room at her mamma's bidding After a short but animated conversation, it was decided that this mode of choice should be adopted; and now all stood in anxious expectancy to see who first should enter. At last footsteps were heard approaching, and the interest rose higher.

"Leddy Janet was right," said Sir Andrew, with a grin; "ye'll hae Mrs. Malone for your Sovereign, I ken her step weel."

"By Jove!" cried Upton, "I'll dispute the succession; that would never do."

"That's a lighter tread and a faster," said Cashel, listening.

"There are two coming," cried Mrs. White; "I hear voices; how are we then to decide?"

There was no time to canvass this knotty point, when a hand was heard upon the door-handle; it turned, and just as the door moved, a sound of feet upon the terrace without—running at full speed—turned every eye in that direction, and the same instant Miss Meek sprang into the room through the window, while Lord Charles and Linton hurried after her, at the same moment that Lady Kilgoff, followed by Olivia Kennyfeck, entered by the door.

Miss Meek's appearance might have astonished the company, had even her *entrée* been more ceremonious, for she was without hat, her hair falling in long dishevelled masses about her shoulders, and her riding-habit, torn and ragged, was carried over one arm, with a freedom much more in accordance with speed than grace.

"Beat by two lengths, Charley," cried she, in a joyous, merry laugh; "beat in a canter—Mr. Linton, nowhere."

"Oh dear me, what is all this, Jemima love?" softly sighed her bland papa; "you've not been riding, I hope?"

"Schooling a bit with Charley, Pa, and as we left the nags at the stable, they challenged me to a race home; I don't think they'll do it again. Do look how they're blown."

Some of the company laughed good-humouredly at the girlish gaiety of the scene. Others, among whom, it is sad to say, were many of the younger ladies, made significant signs of being shocked by the indecorum, and gathered in groups to canvass the papa's indifference and the daughter's indelicacy. Meanwhile Cashel had been completely occupied with Lady Kilgoff, making the usual inquiries regarding fatigue and rest, but in a manner that bespoke all his interest in a favoured guest.

"Are you aware to what high destiny the Fates have called you?" said he, laughing. "Some attain fortune by being first to seek her—*you*, on the contrary, win by dallying. We had decided, a few moments before you came in, that the first lady who entered should be the Queen of our party—this lot is yours."

"I beg to correct you, Mr. Cashel," cried Lady Janet, smartly; "Miss Meek entered before her Ladyship."

"Oh yes!" "Certainly!" "Without a doubt!" resounded from the whole company, who were not sorry to confer their suffrages on the madcap girl rather than the fashionable beauty.

"How distressing!" sighed Mr. Meek. "Oh dear! I hope this is not so—nay, I'm sure, Jemima, it cannot be the case."

"You're thinking of George Colman, Meek—I see you are," cried Linton.

"No, indeed—no, upon my honour. What was it about Colman?"

"The story is everybody's story. The Prince insisted once that George was his senior, and George only corrected himself of his mistake by saying that 'he could not possibly have had the rudeness to enter the world before his Royal Highness.'"

"Ah! yes—very true—so it was," sighed Meek, who affected not to perceive the covert sneer at his assumed courtesy.

While, therefore, the party gathered around Cashel, with eager assurance of Miss Meek's precedence, Lady Kilgoff, rising, crossed the room to where that young lady was standing, and gracefully arranging her loose-flowing ringlets into a knot at the back of the head, fastened them by a splendid comb which she took from her own, and whose top was fashioned into a handsome coronet of gold, saying, "The question of legitimacy is solved for ever—the Pretender yields her crown to the true Sovereign."

The gracefulness and tact of this sudden movement called forth the warmest acknowledgments of all save Lady Janet, who whispered to Miss Kennyfeck: "It is pretty clear, I fancy, who is to pay for the crown jewels!"

"Am I really the Queen?" cried the young girl, half wild with delight.

"Most assuredly, Madam," said Linton, kissing her hand in deep reverence. "I beg to be first to tender my homage."

"That's so like him!" cried she, laughing; "but you shall be no officer of mine. Where's Charley? I want to make him Master of the Buckhounds, if there be buckhounds."

"Will you not appoint your ladies first, Madam?" said Lady Janet; "or, are your preferences for the other sex to leave us quite forgotten?"

"Be all of you everything you please," rejoined the childish, merry voice, "with Charley Frobisher for Master of the Horse."

"Linton for Master of the Revels," said some one.

"Agreed," said she.

"Mr. Cashel had better be First Lord of the Treasury, I suspect," said Lady Janet, snappishly, "if the Administration is to last."

"And if ye a'ways wear drapery o' this fashion," said Sir Andrew, taking up the torn fragment of her riding-habit as he spoke, "I maun say that the Mistress of the Robes will na be a sinecure."

"Will any one tell me what are my powers?" said she, sitting down with an air of mock dignity.

"Will any one dare to say what they are not?" responded Cashel.

"Have I unlimited command in everything?"

"In everything, Madam; I, and all mine, are at your orders."

"That's what the farce will end in," whispered Lady Janet to Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"Well, then, to begin. The Court will dine with us to-day—to-morrow we will hunt in our royal forest; our private band——Have we a private band, Mr. Linton?"

"Certainly, your Majesty; so private as to be almost undiscoverable."

"Then our private band will perform in the evening; perhaps, too, we shall dance. Remember, my Lords and Ladies, we are a young Sovereign, who loves pleasure, and that a sad face, or a mournful one, is treason to our person. Come forward now, and let us name our household."

While the group gathered around the wild and high-spirited girl, in whose merry mood even the least disposed were drawn to participate, Linton approached Lady Kilgoff, who had seated herself near a window, and was affecting to arrange a frame of embroidery, on which she rarely bestowed a moment's labour.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### LADY KILGOFF AT BAY.

**I'll make her brew the beverage herself,**
**With her own fingers stir the cup,**
**And know 'tis poison as she drinks it.**

HAROLD.

HAD Linton been about to renew an acquaintance with one he had scarcely known before, and who might possibly have ceased to remember him, his manner could not have been more studiously diffident and respectful.

"I rejoice to see your Ladyship here," said he, in a low, deliberate voice; "where, on the last time we spoke together, you seemed uncertain of coming."

"Very true, Mr. Linton," said she, not looking up from her work; "my Lord had not fully made up his mind."

"Say, rather, your Ladyship had changed yours," said he, with a cold smile; "a privilege you are not wont to deny yourself."

"I might have exercised it oftener in life with advantage," replied she, still holding her head bent over the embroidery frame.

"Don't you think that your Ladyship and I are old friends enough to speak without innuendo?"

"If we speak at all," said she, with a low but calm accent.

"True, that is to be thought of," rejoined he, with an unmoved quietude of voice. "Being in a manner prepared for a change in your Ladyship's sentiments towards me——"

"Sir!" said she, interrupting, and as suddenly raising her face, which was now covered with a deep blush.

"I trust I have said nothing to provoke reproof," said Linton, coldly.

Your Ladyship is well aware if my words be not true. I repeat it, then—your sentiments *are* changed towards me, or—the alteration is not of *my* choosing—I was deceived in the expression of them when last we met."

It may suit your purpose, Sir, but it can scarcely conform to the generosity of a gentleman, to taunt me with acceding to your request for a meeting. If any other weakness can be alleged against me, pray let me hear it."

"When we last met," said Linton, in a voice of lower and deeper meaning than before, "we did so that *I* might speak, and *you* hear, the avowal of a passion which for years has filled my heart—against which I have struggled and fought in vain—to stifle which I have plunged into dissipations that I detested, and followed ambitions I despised—to obliterate all memory of which I would stoop to crime itself, rather than suffer on in the hopeless misery I must do."

"I will hear no more of this," said she, pushing back the work-table, and preparing to rise.

"You must, and you shall hear me, Madam," said he, replacing the table and affecting to arrange it for her. "I conclude you do not wish this amiable company to arbitrate between us."

"Oh, Sir! is it thus you threaten me?"

"You should say compromise, Madam. There can be no threat where a common ruin impends on all concerned."

"To what end all this, Mr. Linton?" said she. "You surely cannot expect from me any return to a feeling which, if it once existed, you yourself were the means of uprooting for ever. Even *you* could scarcely be ungenerous enough to persecute one for whose misery you have done already too much."

"Will you accept my arm for half an hour?" cried he, interrupting. "I pledge myself it shall be the last time I either make such a request, or even allude to this topic between us. On the pretence of showing you the house, I may be able—if not to justify myself—nay, I see how little you care for that—well, at least to assure you that I have no other wish, no other hope, than to see you happy."

"I cannot trust you," said she, in a tone of agitation; "already we are remarked."

"So I perceive," said he, in an under tone; then added, in a voice audible enough to be heard by the rest, "I am too vain of my architectural merits to leave their discovery to chance, and as you are good enough to say you would like to see the house, pray will your Ladyship accept my arm, while I perform the cicerone on myself?"

The "coup" succeeded; and, to avoid the difficulty and embarrassment

a refusal would have created, Lady Kilgoff arose, and prepared to accompany him.

"Eh, what—what is't, my Lady?" said Lord Kilgoff, suddenly awaking from a kind of lethargic slumber, as she whispered some words in his ear.

"Her Ladyship is telling you not to be jealous, my Lord, while she is making the tour of the house with Mr. Linton," said Lady Janet, with a malicious sparkle of her green eyes.

"Why not make it a royal progress?" said Sir Harvey; "her Majesty the Queen might like it well."

"Her Majesty likes everything that promises amusement," said the wild romp; "come, Charley, give us your arm."

"No, I've got a letter or two to write," said he, rudely; "there's Upton or Jennings quite ready for any foolery."

"This is too bad!" cried she; and through all the pantomime of mock royalty, a real tear rose to her eyes, and rolled heavily down her cheek; then, with a sudden change of humour, she said, "Mr. Cashel, will *you* take me?"

The request was too late, for already he had given his arm to Lady Janet; an act of devotion he was performing with the expression of a saint under martyrdom.

"Sir Harvey—there's no help for it—we are reduced to *you*."

But Sir Harvey was leaving the room with Olivia Kennyfeck. In fact, couples paired off in every direction; the only disengaged cavalier being Sir Andrew MacFarline, who, with a sardonic grin on his features, came hobbling forward, as he said,

"Ye maunna tak' sich long strides, Missy, if ye ga wi' *me*, for I've got a couple o' ounces of Langredge shot in my left knee—forbye the gout in both ankles."

"I say, Jim," called out Lord Charles, as she moved away, "if you like to ride Principino this afternoon, he's ready for you."

"Are *you* going?" said she, turning her head.

"Yes."

"Then *I'll* not go." And so saying, she left the room.

When Linton, accompanied by Lady Kilgoff, issued from the drawing-room, instead of proceeding through the billiard-room towards the suite which formed the "show" part of the mansion, he turned abruptly to his left, and passing through a narrow corridor, came out upon a terrace, at the end of which stood a large conservatory, opening into the garden.

"I ask pardon," said he, "if I reverse the order of our geography, and show you the frontiers of the realm before we visit the capital, but other-

wise we shall only be the advance-guard of that interesting company, who have nothing more at heart than to overhear us."

Lady Kilgoff walked along without speaking, at his side, having relinquished the support of his arm with a stiff, frigid courtesy. Had any one been there to mark the two figures, as side by side they went, each deep in thought, and not even venturing a glance at the other, he might well have wondered what strange link could connect them. It was thus they entered the conservatory, where two rows of orange-trees formed a lane of foliage almost impenetrable to the eye.

"As this may be the last time we shall ever speak together in secret——"

"You have promised as much, Sir," said she, interrupting; and the very rapidity of her utterance betrayed the eagerness of her wish.

"Be it so, Madam," replied he, coldly, and with a tone of sternness very different from that he had used at first. "I have ever preferred your wishes to my own. I shall never prove false to that allegiance. As we are now about to speak on terms which never can be resumed, let us at least be frank. Let us use candour with each other. Even unpleasing truth is better at such a moment than smooth-tongued insincerity."

"This preamble does not promise well," said Lady Kilgoff, with a cold smile.

"Not, perhaps, for the agreeability of our interview, but it may save us both much time and much temper. I have said that you are changed towards me."

"Oh, Sir! if I had suspected that this was to be the theme——" She stopped, and seemed uncertain, when he finished the speech for her.

"You would never have accorded me this meeting. Do be frank, Madam, and spare me the pain of self-inflicted severity. Well, I will not impose upon your kindness, nor indeed was such my intention, if you had but heard me out. Yes, Madam, I should have told you that while I deplore that alteration, I no more make you chargeable with it, than *you* can call *me* to account for cherishing a passion without a hope. Both one and the other are independent of us. That one should forget and the other remember is beyond mere volition."

He waited for some token of assent—some slight evidence of concurrence—but none came, and he resumed:

"When first I had the happiness of being distinguished by some slight show of your preference, there were many others who sought with eagerness for that position I was supposed to occupy in your favour. It was the first access of vanity in my heart, and it cost me dearly. Some, envied me—some, scoffed—some, predicted that my triumph would be a brief one—

some, were rude enough to say that I was only placed like a buoy, to show the passage, and that I should lie fast at anchor while others sailed on with prosperous gale and favouring fortune. You, Madam, best know which of these were right. I see that I weary you. I can conceive how distasteful all these memories must be, nor should I evoke them without absolute necessity. To be brief, then, you are now about to play over with another the very game by which you once deceived me. It is your caprice to sacrifice another to your vanity; but know, Madam, the liberties which the world smiled at in Miss Gardiner will be keenly criticised in the Lady Kilgoff. In the former case, the most malevolent could but hint at a mésalliance; in the latter, evil tongues can take a wider latitude. To be sure, the fascinating qualities of the suitor, his wealth, his enviable position, will plead with some; my Lord's age and decrepitude will weigh with others; but even these charitable persons will not spare *you*. Your own sex are seldom over-merciful in their judgments. Men are unscrupulous enough to hint that there was no secret in the matter; some will go further, and affect to say that they themselves were not unfavourably looked on."

"Will you give me a chair, Sir," said she, in a voice which, though barely above a whisper, vibrated with intense passion. Linton hastened to fetch a seat, his whole features glowing with the elation of his vengeance. This passed rapidly away, and as he placed the chair for her to sit down, his face had resumed its former cold, almost melancholy expression.

"I hope you are not ill?" said he, with an air of feeling.

A glance of the most ineffable scorn was her only reply.

"It is with sincere sorrow that I inflict this pain upon you; indeed, when I heard of that unhappy yacht excursion, my mind was made up to see Lord Kilgoff the very moment of his arrival, and, on any pretence, to induce him to leave this. This hope, however, was taken from me, when I beheld the sad state into which he had fallen, leaving me no other alternative than to address yourself. I will not hurt your ears by repeating the inventions, each full of falsehood, that heralded your arrival here. The insulting discussions how you should be met—whether your conduct had already precluded your acceptance amongst the circle of your equals—or, that you were only a subject of avoidance to mothers of marriageable daughters, and maiden ladies of excessive virtue. You have mixed in the world, and therefore can well imagine every ingenious turn of this peculiar eloquence. How was I—I who have known—I who—nay, Madam, not a word shall pass my lips in reference to that theme—I would only ask, could I hear these things, could I see your foot nearing the cliff and not cry out, Stop? —Another step and you are lost! There are women who can play this dangerous game with cool heads and cooler hearts schooled in all the

frigid indifference that would seem the birthright of a certain class, the secrets of their affections die with them—but you are not one of these. Born in what they would call an humbler, but I should call a far higher, sphere, where the feelings are fresher and the emotions purer, *you* might chance to—fall in love!"

A faint smile, so faint that it conveyed no expression to her eyes, was Lady Kilgoff's acknowledgment of these last words.

"Have you finished, Sir?" said she, as, after a pause of some seconds, he stood still.

"Not yet, Madam," replied he, dryly.

"In that case, Sir, would it not be as well to tell the man who is lingering yonder to leave this? except, perhaps, it may be your desire to have a witness to your words."

Linton started, and grew deadly pale; for he now perceived that the man must have been in the conservatory during the entire interview. Hastening round to where he stood, his fears were at once dispelled; for it was the Italian sailor, Giovanni, who, in the multiplicity of his accomplishments, was now assisting the gardener among the plants.

"It is of no consequence, Madam," said he, returning; "the man is an Italian, who understands nothing of English."

"*You* are always fortunate, Mr. Linton," said she, with a deep emphasis on the pronoun.

"I have ceased to boast of my good luck, for many a day."

"Having, doubtless, so many other qualities to be proud of," said she, with a malicious sparkle of her dark eyes.

"The question is now, Madam, of one far more interesting than *me*."

"Can that be possible, Sir? Is any one's welfare of such moment to his friends—to the world at large—as the high-minded, the honourable, the open-hearted Mr. Linton, who condescends, for the sake of a warning to his young friends, to turn gambler, and ruin them; while he has the daring courage to single out a poor unprotected woman, without one who could rightfully defend her, and, under the miserable mask of interest, to insult her?"

"Is it thus you read my conduct, Madam?" said he, with an air at once sad and reproachful.

"Not altogether, Mr. Linton. Besides the ineffable pleasure of giving pain, I perceive that you are acquitting a debt—the debt of hate you owe me; because——but I cannot descend to occupy the same level with you in this business. My reply to you is a very short one. Your insult to me must go unpunished; for, as you well know, I have not one to resent it. You have, however, introduced another name in this discussion; to that

gentleman I will reveal all that you have said this day. The consequences may be what they will, I care not; I never provoked them. You best know, Sir, how the reckoning will fare with you."

Linton grew pale, almost lividly so, while he bit his lip till the very blood came; then, suddenly recovering himself, he said: "I am not aware of having mentioned a name. I think your Ladyship must have been mistaken; but"—and here he laughed slightly—"you will scarce succeed in sowing discord between me and my old friend Lord Charles Frobisher."

"Lord Charles Frobisher!" echoed she, almost stunned with the effrontery.

"You seem surprised, Madam. I trust your Ladyship meant no other." The insolence of his manner, as he said this, left her unable for some minutes to reply, and when she did speak, it was with evident effort.

"I trust now, Sir, that we have spoken for the last time together. I own—and it is, indeed, humiliation enough to own it—your words have deeply insulted me. I cannot deny you the satisfaction of knowing this; and yet, with all these things before me, I do not hate—I only despise you."

So saying, she moved towards the door, but Linton stepped forward, and said: "One instant, Madam. You seem to forget that we are pledged to walk through the rooms; our amiable friends are doubtless looking for us."

"I will ask Mr. Cashel to be my chaperon another time," said she, carelessly; and drawing her shawl around her, passed out, leaving Linton alone in the conservatory.

"Ay, by St. Paul! the work goes bravely on," cried he, as soon as she had disappeared. "If she ruin not him and herself to boot, now, I am sore mistaken. The game is full of interest, and, if I had not so much in hand, would delight me."

With this brief soliloquy, he turned to where the Italian was standing, pruning an orange-tree.

"Have you learned any English yet, Giovanni?"

A slight but significant gesture of one finger gave the negative.

"No matter, your own soft vowels are in more request here. The dress I told you of is now come; my servant will give it to you; so, be ready with your guitar, if the ladies wish for it, this evening."

Giovanni bowed respectfully, and went on with his work, and soon after Linton strolled into the garden to muse over the late scene.

Had any one been there to mark the signs of triumphant elation on his features, they would have seen the man in all the sincerity of his bold, bad heart. His success was perfect. Knowing well the proud nature of the

young, high-spirited woman, thoroughly acquainted with her impatient temper and haughty character, he rightly foresaw that to tell her she had become the subject of a calumny, was to rouse her pride to confront it openly. To whisper that the world would not admit of this or that, was to make her brave that world, or sink under the effort.

To sting her to such resistance was his wily game, and who knew better how to play it? The insinuated sneers at the class to which she had once belonged, as one not "patented" to assume the vices of their betters, was a deep and most telling his; and he saw, when they separated, that her mind was made up, at any cost and every risk, to live down the slander by utter contempt of it. Linton asked for no more. "Let her," said he to himself, "but enter the lists with the world for an adversary! I'll give her all the benefit of the best motives—as much purity of heart, and so forth, as she cares for—but, 'I'll name the winner,' after all."

Too true. The worthy people who fancy that an innate honesty of purpose can compensate for all the breaches of conventional use, are like the volunteers of an army who refuse to wear its uniform, and are as often picked down by their allies as by their enemies.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A PARTIAL RECOVERY AND A RELAPSE.

Such a concourse ne'er was seen
Of coaches, noddies, cars, and jingles,
"Chars-à-bancs"—to hold sixteen,
And "Sulkies" meant to carry singles.

THE PIC-NIC: A LAY.

It is an old remark that nothing is so stupid as love-letters; and, pretty much in the same spirit, we may affirm that there are few duller topics than festivities. The scenes in which the actor is most interested are, out of compensation, perhaps, those least worthy to record; the very inability of description to render them is disheartening too. One must eternally resort to the effects produced, as evidences of the cause, just as, when we would characterise a climate, we find ourselves obliged to fall back upon the vegetable productions, the fruits and flowers of the seasons, to convey even anything of what we desire. So is it Pleasure has its own atmosphere—we may breathe, but hardly chronicle it.

These prosings of ours have reference to the gaieties of Tubbermore,

which certainly were all that a merry party and an unbounded expenditure could compass. The style of living was princely in its splendour: luxuries fetched from every land—the rarest wines of every country, the most exquisite flowers—all that taste can suggest, and gold can buy, were there; and while the order of each day was maintained with undiminished splendour, every little fancy of the guests was studied with a watchful politeness that marks the highest delicacy of hospitality.

If a bachelor's house be wanting in the gracefulness which is the charm of a family reception, there is a freedom, a degree of liberty in all the movements of the guests, which some would accept as a fair compromise; for, while the men assume a full equality with their host, the ladies are supreme in all such establishments. Roland Cashel was, indeed, not the man to dislike this kind of democracy; it spared him trouble; it inflicted no tiresome routine of attentions; he was free as the others to follow the bent of his humour, and he asked for no more.

It was without one particle of vulgar pride of wealth that he delighted in the pleasure he saw around him; it was the mere buoyancy of a high-spirited nature. The cost no more entered into his calculations in a personal than a pecuniary sense. A consciousness that he was the source of all that splendid festivity—that his will was the motive-power of all that complex machinery of pleasure—increased, but did not constitute, his enjoyment. To see his guests happy, in the various modes they preferred, was his great delight, and, for once, he felt inclined to think that wealth had great privileges.

The display of all, which gratified him most, was that which usually took place each day after luncheon; when the great space before the house was thronged with equipages of various kinds and degrees, with saddle-horses and mounted grooms, and amid all the bustle of discussing where to, and with whom, the party issued forth to spend the hours before dinner.

A looker-on would have been amused to watch all the little devices in request, to join this party, to avoid that, to secure a seat in a certain carriage, or to escape from some other; Linton's chief amusement being to thwart as many of these plans as he could, and while he packed a sleepy Chief Justice into the same barouche with the gay Kennyfeck girls, to commit Lady Janet to the care of some dashing dragoon, who did not dare decline the wife of a "Commander of the Forces."

Cashel always joined the party on horseback, so long as Lady Kilgoff kept the house, which she did for the first week of her stay; but when she announced her intention of driving out, he offered his services to accompany her. By the merest accident it chanced that the very day she fixed on for her first excursion was that on which Cashel had determined to try

a new and most splendid equipage which had just arrived. It was a phaeton, built in all the costly splendour of the "Regency of the Duke of Orleans"—one of those gorgeous toys which even a voluptuous age gazed at with wonder. Two jet-black Arabians, of perfect symmetry, drew it, the whole forming a most beautiful equipage.

Exclamations of astonishment and admiration broke from the whole party as the carriage drove up to the door, where all were now standing.

"Whose can it be?—Where did it come from?—What a magnificent phaeton! Mr. Cashel, pray tell us all about it. Do, Mr. Linton, give us its history."

"It has none as yet, my dear Mrs. White; that it may have, one of these days, is quite possible."

Lady Janet heard the speech, and nodded significantly in assent.

"Mr. Linton, you are coming with us, a'n't you?" said a lady's voice from a britschka close by.

"I really don't know how the arrangement is; Cashel said something about my driving Lady Kilgoff."

Lady Kilgoff pressed her lips close, and gathered her mantle together as if by some sudden impulse of temper, but never spoke a word. At the same instant Cashel made his appearance from the house.

"Are you to drive me, Mr. Cashel?" said she, calmly.

"If you will honour me so far," replied he, bowing.

"I fancied you said something to me about being her Ladyship's charioteer," said Linton.

"You must have been dreaming, man," cried Cashel, laughing.

"Will you allow my Lady to choose?" rejoined Linton, jokingly, while he stole at her a look of insolent malice.

Cashel stood uncertain what to say or do in the emergency, when, with a firm and determined voice, Lady Kilgoff said:

"I must own I have no confidence in Mr. Linton's guidance."

"There, Tom," said Cashel, gaily, "I'm glad your vanity came in for that."

"I have only to hope that you are in safer conduct, my Lady," said Linton; and he bowed with uncovered head, and then stood gazing after the swift carriage as it hastened down the avenue.

"Is it all true about these Kennyfeck girls having so much 'tin?'" said Captain Jennings, as he stroked down his moustache complacently.

"They say five-and-twenty thousand each," said Linton, "and I rather credit the rumour."

"Eh, aw! one might do worse," yawned the hussar, languidly; "I wish

they hadn't that confounded accent!" And so he moved off to join the party on horseback.

"You are coming with me, Jemima," said Mr. Downie Meek to his daughter. "I want to pay a visit to those works at Killaloe, we have so much Committee talk in the House on inland navigation. Oh dear! it is very tiresome."

"Charley says I'm to go with him, Pa; he's about to try Smasher as a leader, and wants me, if anything goes wrong."

"Oh dear!—quite impossible."

"Yes, yes, Jim, I insist," said Frobisher, in a half-whisper; "never mind the Governor."

"Here comes the drag, Pa. Oh, how beautiful it looks! There they go, all together; and Smasher, how neatly he carries himself! I say, Charley, he has no fancy for that splinter-bar so near him—it touches his near hock every instant; wouldn't it be better to let his trace a hole looser?"

"So it would," said Frobisher; "but get up and hold the ribbons till I have got my gloves on. I say, Linton, keep Downie in chat one moment, until we're off."

This kindly office was, however, anticipated by Lady Janet MacFarlane, who, in her brief transit from the door to the carriage, always contrived to drop each of the twenty things she loaded herself with at starting, and thus to press into the service as many of the bystanders as possible, who followed, one with a muff, another with a smelling-bottle, a third with a book, a fourth with her knitting, and so on; while Flint brought up the rear with more air-cushions and hot-water apparatus than ever were seen before for the accommodation of two persons. In fact, if the atmosphere of our dear island, instead of being the mere innocent thing of fog it is, had been surcharged with all the pestilential vapours of the mistrale and the tiphoon together, she could not have armed herself with stronger precautions against it, while even Sir Andrew, with the constitution of a Russian bear, was compelled to wear blue spectacles in sunshine and a respirator when it loured; leaving him, as he said, to the "domnable alternative o' being blind or dumb."

"I maun say," muttered he, behind his barrier of mouth-plate, "that Mesther Cashel has his ain notions aboot amusin' his company when he leaves ane o' his guests to drive aboot wi' his ain wife. "Ech, Sir, it is a pleasure I need na hae come so far to enjoy."

"Where's Sir Harvey Upton, Sir Andrew?" said my Lady, tartly; "he has never been near me to-day. I hope he's not making a fool of himself with those Kennyfeck minxes."

"I dinna ken, and I dinna care," growled Sir Andrew; and then, to himself, he added, "An' if he be, it's aye better fooling wi' young lassies than doited auld women!"

"A place for *you*, Mr. Linton!" said Mrs. White, as she seated herself in a low drosky, where her companion, Mr. Howle, sat, surrounded with all the details for a sketching excursion.

"Thanks, but I have nothing so agreeable in prospect."

"Why, what are you about to do?"

"Alas! I must set out on a canvassing expedition, to court the sweet voices of my interesting constituency. You know that I am a candidate for the borough."

"That must be very disagreeable."

"It is; but I could not get off; Cashel is incurably lazy, and *I* never know how to say 'no.'"

"Well, good-by, and all fortune to you," said she; and they drove away.

Mr. Kennyfeck and the Chief Justice, mounted on what are called sure-footed ponies, and a few others, still lingered about the door, but Linton took no notice of them, but at once re-entered the house.

For some time previous he had remarked that Lord Kilgoff seemed, as it were, struggling to emerge from the mist that had shrouded his faculties; his perceptions each day grew quicker and clearer, and even when silent, Linton observed that a shrewd expression of the eye would betoken a degree of apprehension few would have given him credit for. With the keenness of a close observer, too, Linton perceived that he more than once made use of his favourite expression, "It appears to *me*," and slight as the remark might seem, there is no more certain evidence of the return to thought and reason than the resumption of any habitual mode of expression.

Resolved to profit by this gleam of coming intelligence, by showing the old Peer an attention he knew would be acceptable, Linton sent up a message to ask "If his Lordship would like a visit from him?" A most cordial acceptance was returned; and, a few moments after, Linton entered the room where he sat, with all that delicate caution so becoming a sick chamber.

Motioning his visitor to sit down, by a slight gesture of the finger, while he made a faint effort to smile, in return for the other's salutation, the old man sat, propped up by pillows, and enveloped in shawls, pale, sad, and careworn.

"I was hesitating for two entire days, my Lord," said Linton, lowering his voice to suit the character of the occasion, "whether I might propose

to come and sit an hour with you, and I have only to beg that you will not permit me to trespass a moment longer than you feel disposed to endure me."

"Very kind of you—most considerate, Sir," said the old Peer, bowing with an air of haughty courtesy.

"You seem to gain strength every day, my Lord," resumed Linton, who well knew that there is nothing like a personal topic to awaken a sick man's interest.

"There is something here," said the old man, slowly, as he placed the tip of his finger on the centre of his forehead.

"Mere debility; nervous debility, my Lord. You are paying the heavy debt an over-worked intellect must always acquit; but rest and repose will soon restore you."

"Yes, Sir," muttered the other, with a weak smile, as though, without fathoming the sentiment, he felt that something agreeable to his feelings had been spoken.

"I have been impatient for your recovery, my Lord, I will confess to you, on personal grounds; I feel now how much I have been indebted to your Lordship's counsel and advice all through life, by the very incertitude that tracks me. In fact, I can resolve on nothing, determine nothing, without your sanction."

The old man nodded assentingly; the assurance had his most sincere conviction.

"It would seem, my Lord, that I must—whether I will or no—stand for this borough, here; there is no alternative, for you are aware that Cashel is quite unfit for public business. Each day he exhibits more and more of those qualities which bespeak far more goodness of heart than intellectual training or culture. His waywardness and eccentricity might seriously damage his own party—could he even be taught that he had one—and become terrible weapons in the hands of the enemy. I was speaking of Cashel, my Lord," said Linton, as it were answering the look of inquiry in the old man's face.

"I hate him, Sir," said the old Peer, with a bitterness of voice and look that well suited the words.

"I really cannot wonder at it," said Linton, with a deep sigh; "such duplicity is too shocking—far too shocking—to contemplate."

"Eh!—what? What did you say, Sir?" cried the old man, impatiently.

"I was remarking, my Lord, that I have no confidence in his sincerity—that he strikes me as capable of playing a double part."

A look of disappointment succeeded to the excited expression of the old man's face; he had evidently expected some revelation, and now his features became clouded and gloomy.

"We may be unjust, my Lord," said Linton. "It may be a prejudice on our part; others would seem to have a different estimate of that gentleman. Meek thinks highly of him."

"Who, Sir; I didn't hear you?" asked he, snappishly.

"Meek—Downie Meek, my Lord."

"Pshaw!" said the old man, with a shrewd twinkle of the eye, that made Linton fear the mind behind it was clearer than he suspected.

"I know, my Lord," said he, hastily, "that you always held the worthy Secretary cheap; but you weighed him in a balance too nice for the majority of people——"

"What does that old woman say? Tell me *her* opinion of Cashel," said Lord Kilgoff, rallying into something like his accustomed manner. "You know whom I mean!" cried he, impatient at Linton's delay in answering; "the old woman one sees everywhere; she married that Scotch sergeant——"

"Lady Janet MacFarline——"

"Exactly, Sir."

"She thinks precisely with your Lordship."

"I'm sure of it; I told my Lady so," muttered he to himself.

Linton caught the words with eagerness, and his dark eyes kindled; for at last were they nearing the territory he wanted to occupy.

"Lady Kilgoff," said he, slowly, "does not need any aid to appreciate him; she reads him thoroughly, the heartless, selfish, unprincipled spendthrift that he is."

"She does not, Sir," rejoined the old man, with a loud voice, and a stroke of his cane upon the floor, that echoed through the room. "You never were more mistaken in your life. His insufferable puppyism, his reckless effrontery, his underbred familiarity, are precisely the very qualities she is pleased with. 'They are so different,' as she says, 'from the tiresome routine of fashionable manners.'"

"Unquestionably they are, my Lord," said Linton, with a smile.

"Exactly, Sir; they differ, as do her Ladyship's own habits from those of every Lady in the Peerage. I told her so. I begged to set her right on that subject at least."

"Your Lordship's refinement is a most severe standard," said Linton, bowing low.

"It should be an example, Sir, as well as a chastisement. Indeed, I believe few would have failed to profit by it." The air of insolent pride in

which he spoke, seemed for an instant to have brought back the wonted look to his features, and he sat up, with his lips compressed, and his chin protruded, as in his days of yore.

"I would entreat your Lordship to remember," said Linton, "how few have studied in the same school you have; how few have enjoyed the intimacy of 'the most perfect gentleman of all Europe;' and of that small circle, who is there could have derived the same advantage from the privilege?"

"Your remark is very just, Sir. I owe much, very much, to his Royal Highness."

The tone of humility in which he said this was a high treat to the sardonic spirit of his listener.

"And what a penance to you must be a visit in such a house as this?" said Linton, with a sigh.

"True, Sir; but who induced me to make it? Answer me that."

Linton started with amazement, for he was very far from supposing that his Lordship's memory was clear enough to retain the events of an interview that occurred some months before.

"I never anticipated that it would cost you so dearly, my Lord," said he, cautiously, and prepared to give his words any turn events might warrant. For once, however, the ingenuity was wasted. Lord Kilgoff, wearied and exhausted by the increased effort of his intellect, had fallen back in his chair, and, with drooping lips and fallen jaw, sat the very picture of helpless fatuity.

"So, then," said Linton, as on tiptoe he stole noiselessly away, "if your memory was inopportune, it was, at least, very short-lived. And now, adieu, my Lord, till we want you for another act of the drama."

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### MORE KENNYFECK INTRIGUING.

**We'll have you at our merry-making, too.**

HONEYMOON.

If we should appear, of late, to have forgotten some of those friends with whom we first made our readers acquainted in this veracious history, we beg to plead against any charge of caprice or neglect. The cause is simply this: a story, like a stream, has one main current; and he who would follow the broad river, must eschew being led away by every rivulet which may sepa-

rate from the great flood to follow its own vagrant fancy elsewhere. Now, the Kennyfecks had been meandering after this fashion for some time back. The elder had commenced a very vigorous flirtation with the dashing Captain Jennings, while the younger sister was coyly dallying under the attentions of his brother hussar—less, be it remembered, with any direct intention of surrender, than with the faint hope that Cashel, perceiving the siege, should think fit to rescue the fortress; "Aunt Fanny" hovering near, as "an army of observation," and ready, like the Prussians in the last war, to take part with the victorious side, whichever that might be.

And now, we ask in shame and sorrow, is it not humiliating to think, that of a party of some thirty or more, met together to enjoy in careless freedom the hospitality of a country-house, all should have been animated with the same spirit of intrigue—each bent on his own deep game, and, in some one guise or other of deceitfulness, each following out some scheme of selfish advantage?

Some may say these things are forced and unnatural; that Pleasure proclaims a truce in the great war of life, where combatants lay down their weapons, and mix like friends and allies. We fear this is not the case. Our own brief experiences would certainly tend to a different conclusion. Less a player than a looker-on in the great game, we have seen, through all the excitements of dissipation, all the fascinating pleasures of the most brilliant circles, the steady onward pursuit of self-interest; and, instead of the occasions of social enjoyment being like the palm-shaded wells in the desert, where men meet to taste the peacefulness of perfect rest, they are rather the arena where, in all the glitter of the most splendid armour, the combatants have come to tilt, with more than life upon the issue.

For this, the beauty wreathes herself in all the winning smiles of loveliness; for this, the courtier puts forth his most captivating address and his most seductive manner; for this, the wit sharpens the keen edge of his fancy, and the statesman matures the deep resolve of his judgment. The diamond coronets that deck the hair and add lustre to the eyes—the war-won medals that glitter on the coat of some hardy veteran—the proud insignia of merit that a Sovereign's favour grants—all are worn to this end! Each brings to the game whatever he may possess of superiority, for the contest is ever a severe one.

And now to go back to our company. From Lady Janet, intent upon everything which might minister to her own comfort or mortify her neighbour, to the smooth and soft-voiced Downie Meek—with the kindest of wishes and the coldest of hearts—they were, we grieve to own it, far more imposing to look at, full dressed at dinner, than to investigate by the searching anatomy that discloses the vices and foibles of humanity; and it is,

therefore, with less regret we turn from the great house, in all the pomp of its splendour, to the humble cottage, where Mr. Corrigan dwelt with his granddaughter.

In wide contrast to the magnificence and profusion of the costly household, where each seemed bent on giving way to every caprice that extravagance could suggest, was the simple quietude of that unpretending family. The efforts by which Corrigan had overcome his difficulties, not only cost him all the little capital he possessed in the world, but had also necessitated a mode of living more restricted than he had ever known before. The little luxuries that his station, as well as his age and long use, had made necessaries—the refinements that adorn even the very simplest lives—had all to be, one by one, surrendered. Some of these he gave up manfully, others cost him deeply; and when the day came that he had to take leave of his old grey pony, the faithful companion of so many a lonely ramble, the creature he had reared and petted like a dog, the struggle was almost too much for him.

He walked along beside the man who led the beast to the gate, telling him to be sure and seek out some one who would treat her kindly: "Some there are would do so for my sake; but she deserves it better for her own.—Yes, Nora, I'm speaking of you," said he, caressing her, as she laid her nose over his arm. "I'm sure I never thought we'd have to part."

"She's good as goold this minit," said the man; "an' it'll go hard but I'll get six pounds for her, any way."

"Tell whoever buys her that Mr. Corrigan will give him a crown-piece every Christmas-day that he sees her looking well and in good heart. To be sure, it's no great bribe, we're both so old," said he, smiling; "but my blessing goes with the man that's a friend to her." He sat down as he said this, and held his hand over his face till she was gone. "God forgive me if I set my heart too much on such things, but it's like parting with an old friend. Poor Mary's harp must go next. But here come's Tiernay. Well, Doctor, what news?"

The Doctor shook his head twice or thrice despondingly, but said nothing; at last, he muttered, in a grumbling voice:

"I was twice at the Hall, but there's no seeing Cashel himself; an insolent puppy of a valet turned away contemptuously as I asked for him, and said:

"Mr. Linton, perhaps, might hear what you have to say."

"Is Kennyfeck to be found?"

"Yes, I saw him for a few minutes; but he's like the rest of them; the old fool fancies he's a man of fashion here, and told me he had left 'the Attorney' behind, in Merrion-square. He half confessed to me, however, what

I feared. Cashel has either given a promise to give this farm of yours to Linton——"

"Well, the new landlord will not be less kind than the old one."

"You think so," said Tiernay, sternly. "Is your knowledge of life no better than this? Have you lived till now without being able to read that man? Come, come, Corrigan, don't treat this as a prejudice of mine. I have watched him closely, and he sees it. I tell you again, the fellow is a villain."

"Ay, ay," said Corrigan, laughing; "your doctor's craft has made you always on the look-out for some hidden mischief."

"My doctor's craft has taught me to know that symptoms are never without a meaning. But enough of him; the question is simply this: we have, then, merely to propose to Cashel the purchase of your interest in the cottage, on which you will cede the possession."

"Yes; and give up, besides, all claim at law, for you know we are supported by the highest opinions."

"Pooh—nonsense, man; don't embarrass the case by a pretension they're sure to sneer at. The cottage and the little fields behind it are tangible and palpable; don't weaken your case by a plea you could not press."

"Have your own way, then," said the old man, mildly.

"It is an annuity, you say, you'd wish."

"On Mary's life, not on mine, Doctor."

"It will be a poor thing," said Tiernay, with a sigh.

"They say we could live in some of the towns in Flanders very cheaply," said Corrigan, cheerfully.

"You don't know how to live cheaply," rejoined Tiernay, crankily. "You think, if you don't see a man in black behind your chair, and that you eat off delf instead of silver, that you are a miracle of simplicity. I saw you last Sunday put by the decanter with half a glass of sherry at the bottom of it, and you were as proud of your thrift as if you had reformed your whole household."

"Everything is not learned in a moment, Tiernay," said Corrigan, mildly.

"You are too old to begin, Con Corrigan," said the other, gravely; "such men as you, who have not been educated to narrow fortunes, never learn thrift; they can endure great privatious well enough, but it is the little, petty, dropping ones that break down the spirit—these, they cannot meet."

"A good conscience and a strong will can do a great deal, Tiernay. One thing is certain, that we shall escape persecution from *him*. *He* will scarcely discover us in our humble retreat."

"I've thought of that, too," said Tiernay. "It is the greatest advantage

the plan possesses. Now, the next point is, how to see this same Cashel from all that I can learn, his life is one of dissipation from morning till night. Those fashionable sharpers by whom he is surrounded are making him pay dearly for his admission into the honourable guild."

"The greater the pity," sighed Corrigan; "he appeared to me deserving of a different fate. An easy, complying temper——"

"The devil a worse fault I'd wish my enemy," broke in Tiernay, passionately. "A field without a fence—a house without a door to it! And there, if I am not mistaken, I hear his voice; yes, he's coming along the path, and some one with him, too."

"I'll leave you to talk to him, Tiernay, for you seem in 'the vein.'" And with these words the old man turned into a by-path, just as Cashel, with Lady Kilgoff on his arm, advanced up the avenue.

Nothing is more remarkable than the unconscious homage tendered to female beauty and elegance by men whose mould of mind, as well as habit, would seem to render them insensible to such fascinations, nor is their instinctive admiration a tribute which beauty ever despises.

The change which came over the rough Doctor's expression as the party came nearer exemplified this truth strongly. The look of stern determination with which he was preparing to meet Cashel changed to one of astonishment, and, at last, to undisguised admiration, as he surveyed the graceful mien and brilliant beauty before him. They had left the phaeton at the little wicket, and the exercise on foot had slightly coloured her cheek, and added animation to her features—the only aid necessary to make her loveliness perfect.

"I have taken a great liberty with my neighbour, Doctor Tiernay," said Cashel, as he came near. "Let me present you, however, first—Doctor Tiernay, Lady Kilgoff. I had been telling her Ladyship that the only picturesque portion of this country lies within this holly enclosure, and is the property of my friend Mr. Corrigan, who, although he will not visit me, will not, I'm sure, deny me the pleasure of showing his tasteful grounds to my friends."

"My old friend would be but too proud of such a visitor," said Tiernay, bowing low to Lady Kilgoff.

"Mr. Cashel has not confessed all our object, Mr. Tiernay," said she, assuming her most gracious manner. "Our visit has in prospect the hope of making Miss Leicester's acquaintance; as I know you are the intimate friend of the family, will you kindly say if this be a suitable hour, or, indeed, if our presence here at all would not be deemed an intrusion?"

The Doctor coloured deeply, and his eye sparkled with pleasure, for, strange enough as it may appear, while sneering at the dissipations of the

great house, he felt a degree of indignant anger at the thought of Mary sitting alone and neglected, with gaieties around her on every side.

"It was a most thoughtful kindness of your Ladyship," replied he, "for my friend is too old and too infirm to seek society, and, so, the poor child has no other companionship than two old men, only fit to weary each other."

"You make me hope that our mission will succeed, Sir," said Lady Kilgoff, still employing her most fascinating look and voice; "we may reckon you as an ally, I trust."

"I am your Ladyship's most devoted," said the old man, courteously; "how can I be of service?"

"Our object is to induce Miss Leicester to pass some days with us," said she; "we are plotting various amusements that might interest her—private theatricals among the rest."

"Here she comes, my Lady," said Tiernay, with animation; "I am proud to be the means of introducing her."

Just at this instant Mary Leicester had caught sight of the party, and uncertain whether to advance or retire, was standing for a moment undecided, when Tiernay called out,

"Stay a minute, Miss Mary; Lady Kilgoff is anxious to make your acquaintance."

"This is a very informal mode of opening an intimacy, Miss Leicester," said Lady Kilgoff; "pray let it have the merit of sincerity, for I have long desired to know one of whom I have heard so much."

Mary replied courteously to the speech, and looked pleasedly towards Cashel, to whom she justly attributed the compliment insinuated.

As the two ladies moved on side by side, engaged in conversation, Tiernay slackened his pace slightly, and in a voice of low but earnest import, said,

"Will Mr. Cashel consider it an intrusion if I take this opportunity of speaking to him on a matter of business?"

"Not in the least, Doctor," said Cashel, gaily; "but it's right I should mention that I am most lamentably ignorant of everything that deserves that name. My agent has always saved me from the confession, but the truth will out at last."

"So much the worse, Sir—for others, as well as for yourself," replied Tiernay, bluntly. "The trust a large fortune imposes——but I shall forget myself, if I touch on such a theme. My business is this, Sir—and, in mercy to you, I'll make it very brief. My old friend, Mr. Corrigan, deems it expedient to leave this country, and, in consequence, to dispose of the interest he possesses in these grounds, so long embellished by his taste and culture. He is well aware that much of what he has expended here

has not added substantial value to the property; that, purely ornamental, it has, in great part, repaid himself by the many years of enjoyment it has afforded him. Still he hopes—or rather, I do for him—for, to speak candidly, Sir, *he* has neither courage nor hardihood for these kind of transactions—I hope, Sir, that you, desirous of uniting this farm to the large demesne—as I understand to be the case—will not deem this an unfitting occasion to treat liberally with one whose position is no longer what it once was. I must take care, Mr. Cashel, that I say nothing which looks like solicitation here; the confidence my friend has placed in me would be ill requited by such an error."

"Is there no means of securing Mr. Corrigan's residence here?" said Cashel. "Can I not accommodate his wishes in some other way, and which should not deprive me of a neighbour I prize so highly?"

"I fear not. The circumstances which induce him to go abroad are imperative."

"Would it not be better to reflect on this?" said Cashel. "I do not seek to pry into concerns which are not mine; but I would earnestly ask if some other arrangement be not possible?"

Tiernay shook his head dubiously.

"If this be so, then I can oppose no longer. It only remains for Mr. Corrigan to put his own value on the property, and I accept it."

"Nay, Sir; this generosity will but raise new difficulties. You are about to deal with a man as high-hearted as yourself, and with the punctilious delicacy that a narrow fortune suggests, besides."

"Do you, then, Doctor, who know both of us, be arbitrator. Let it not be a thing for parchments and lawyers' clerks. Let it be an honourable understanding between two gentlemen, and so, no more of it."

"If the world were made up of men like yourself and my old friend, this would be, doubtless, the readiest and the best solution of the difficulty," said Tiernay; "but what would be said if we consented to such an arrangement? What would not be said? Ay, faith, there's not a scandalous rumour that malice could forge would not be rife upon us."

"And do you think such calumnies have any terror for *me?*" cried Cashel.

"When you've lived to *my* age, Sir, you'll reason differently."

"It shall be all as you wish, then," said Cashel. "But stay!" cried he, after a moment's thought; "there is a difficulty I had almost forgotten. I must look that it may not interfere with our plans. When can I see you again? Would it suit you to come and breakfast with me to-morrow? I'll have my man of business, and we'll arrange everything."

"Agreed, Sir; I'll not fail. I like your promptitude. A favour is a double benefit when speedily granted."

"Now I shall ask one from you, Doctor. If I can persuade my kind friends here to visit us, will you, too, be of the party sometimes?"

"Not a bit of it. Why should I, Sir, expose you to the insolent criticism my unpolished manners and rude address would bring upon you—or myself to the disdain that fashionable folk would show me? I am proud—too proud, perhaps—at the confidence you would repose in my honour; I don't wish to blush for my breeding by way of recompense. There, Sir—there is one yonder in every way worthy all the distinction rank and wealth can give her. I feel happy to think that she is to move amongst those who, if they cannot prize her worth, will at least appreciate her fascinations."

"Will Mr. Corrigan consent?"

"He must—he shall," broke in Tiernay; "I'll insist upon it. But come along with me into the cottage, while the ladies are cementing their acquaintance; we'll see him, and talk him over."

So saying, he led Cashel into the little library, where, deep sunk in his thoughts, the old man was seated, with an open book before him, but of which he had not read a line.

"Con!" cried Tiernay, "Mr. Cashel has come to bring you and Miss Mary up to the Hall, to dinner. There, Sir, look at the face he puts on; an excuse in every wrinkle of it."

"But, my dear friend—my worthy Doctor—you know perfectly——"

"I'll know perfectly that you must go—no help for it. I have told Mr. Cashel that you'd make fifty apologies—pretend age—ill-health—want of habit, and so on: the valid reason being that you think his company a set of raffs, and——"

"Oh, Tiernay, I beg you'll not ascribe such sentiments to *me*."

"Well, I thought so myself, t'other day—ay, half an hour ago; but there is a lady yonder, walking up and down the grass-plot, has made me change my mind; come out and see her, man, and then say as many 'No's' as you please." And, half-dragging, half-leading the old man out, Tiernay went on:

"You'll see, Mr. Cashel, how polite he'll grow when he sees the bright eyes and the fair cheek. You'll not hear of any more refusals then, I promise you."

Meanwhile, so far had Lady Kilgoff advanced in the favourable opinion of Miss Leicester, that the young girl was already eager to accept the proffered invitation. Old Mr. Corrigan, however, could not be induced to leave his home, and so it was arranged that Lady Kilgoff should drive over on the following day to fetch her; with which understanding they parted, each looking forward with pleasure to their next meeting.

## CHAPTER XL.

### LINTON'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

Gone! and in secret, too!

Amid all the plans for pleasure which engaged the attention of the great house, two subjects now divided the interest between them. One was the expected arrival of the beautiful Miss Leicester—"Mr. Cashel's babe in the wood," as Lady Janet called her—the other, the reading of a little one-act piece, which Mr. Linton had written for the company. Although both were, in their several ways, "events," the degree of interest they excited was very disproportioned to their intrinsic consequence, and can only be explained by dwelling on the various intrigues and schemes by which that little world was agitated.

Lady Janet, whose natural spitefulness was a most catholic feeling, began to fear that Lady Kilgoff had acquired such an influence over Cashel, that she could mould him to any course she pleased—even a marriage. She suspected, therefore, that this rustic beauty had been selected by her Ladyship as one very unlikely to compete with herself in Roland's regard, and that she was thus securing a lasting ascendancy over him.

Mrs. Leicester White, who saw, or believed she saw, herself neglected by Roland, took an indignant view of the matter, and threw out dubious and shadowy suspicions about "who this young lady might be, who seemed so opportunely to have sprung up in the neighbourhood," and expressed, in confidence, her great surprise, "how Lady Kilgoff could lend herself to such an arrangement."

Mrs. Kennyfeck was outraged at the entrance of a new competitor into the field, where her daughter was no longer a "favourite." In fact, the new visitor's arrival was heralded by no signs of welcome, save from the young men of the party, who naturally were pleased to hear that a very handsome and attractive girl was expected.

As for Aunt Fanny, her indignation knew no bounds; indeed, ever since she had set foot in the house her state had been one little short of insanity. In her own very graphic phrase—"She was fit to be tied at all she saw." Now, when an elderly maiden lady thus comprehensively sums up the cause of her anger, without descending to "a bill of particulars," the chances are, that some personal wrong—real or imaginary—is more in fault than any-

'hing reprehensible in the case she is so severe upon. So was it here Aunt Fanny literally saw nothing, although she heard a great deal. Daily, hourly, were the accusations of the whole Kennyfeck family directed against her for the loss of Cashel. But for her, and her absurd credulity on the statement of an anonymous letter, and there had been no yacht voyage with Lady Kilgoff—no shipwreck—no life in a cabin on the coast—no——In a word, all these events had either not happened at all, or only occurred with Livy Kennyfeck for their heroine.

Roland's cold, almost distant politeness to the young ladies, was marked enough to appear intentional; nor could all the little by-play of flirtation with others excite in him the slightest evidence of displeasure. If the family were outraged at this change, poor Livy herself bore up admirably; and while playing a hundred little attractive devices for Cashel, succeeded in making a very deep impression on the well-whiskered Sir Harvey Upton, of the —th. Indeed, as Linton, who saw everything, shrewdly remarked—"She may not pocket the ball she intended, but, rely on't, she'll make a 'hazard' somewhere."

Of all that great company, but one alone found no place in her heart for some secret wile; this was Miss Meek, who, sadly disappointed at the little influence of her royalty, had ceased to care much for in-door affairs, and spent her mornings "schooling" with Charley, and her evenings listening to sporting talk whenever two or three "fast men" got together in the drawing-room.

The evening that preceded Miss Leicester's intended arrival had been fixed for the reading of Mr. Linton's comedy—a little dramatic piece, which, whether he had stolen wholesale from the French, or only borrowed in part, none knew; but various were the rumours that it would turn out to be a very satirical composition, with allusions to many of those who were to sit in judgment over it. How this supposition originated, or with whom, there is no saying, nor if well-founded in any respect, for Linton had never shown his sketch to any one, nor alluded to it, save in the most vague manner.

Each, however, looked to see his neighbour "shown up;" and while one said, "What a character could be made of old Sir Andrew, with his vulgarity, his deafness, and his gluttony!" another thought that Downie Meek, in his oily smoothness, his sighings, and his "dear me's," would be admirable—all the ladies averring that Lady Kilgoff would be a perfect embodiment of Lady Teazle, as "Sir Peter" suspected, and "Joseph" intended her to be.

Fears for individual safety were merged in hopes of seeing others assailed, and it was in something like a flutter of expectancy that the party assembled in the drawing-room before dinner. Great was their surprise to find that

Mr. Linton did not make his appearance. The dinner was announced, but he never came, and his place vacant at the foot of the table was the continual suggester of every possible reason for his absence. If Lady Kilgoff could not divest herself of a certain terror—vague and meaningless, it is true—the dread she felt proceeded from knowing him to be one whose every act had some deep purpose; while others were then canvassing his absence in easy freedom, she took the first opportunity of asking Cashel whether he were in the secret, or if it were really true that Linton had not communicated, even with him, about his departure.

"I am no better informed than my friends here," said Roland; "and, to say truth, I have given myself little thought about the matter. We have not, as you are aware, of late seen so much of each other as we used once; he has himself rather drawn off me, and I have left the interval between us to widen without much regret."

"Remember, however, what I told you; he can be a terrible enemy."

Cashel smiled calmly as he said, "I have consorted with men whose vengeance never took longer to acquit than the time occupied in drawing a knife from the sleeve or a pistol from the girdle. I care very little for him whose weapon is mere subtlety."

"It is this over-confidence makes me fear for you," said she, anxiously; "for, I say again, you do not know him."

"I wish I never had," said Cashel, with an earnestness of voice and accent. "He has involved me in a hundred pursuits for which I feel neither taste nor enjoyment. To him I owe it that pleasure is always associated in my mind with mere debauch; and the only generosity he has taught me has been the spendthrift waste of the gaming-table."

"Could you not find out something of him—when he went, and in what direction?" said she, anxiously. "I cannot tell you why, but my heart misgives me about his departure."

More in compliance with her scruples than that he deemed the matter worth a thought, Cashel left the room to make inquiries from the servants; but all he could learn was, that Mr. Linton arose before daybreak and left the house on foot; his own servant not knowing in what direction, nor having heard anything of his master's previous intention.

His intimacy with the family at the cottage left it possible that they might know something of his movements, and Cashel accordingly despatched a messenger thither to ask; but with the same fruitless result as every previous inquiry.

While Cashel was following up this search with a degree of interest that increased as the difficulty augmented, he little knew how watchfully his every word and gesture was noted down by one who stood at his side. This

was Mr. Phillis, who, while seeming to participate in his master's astonishment, threw out from time to time certain strange, vague hints, less suggestive of his own opinions, than as baits to attract those of his master.

"Very odd, indeed, Sir—very strange—so regular a gentleman, too—always rising at the same hour. His man says, he's like the clock. To be sure," added he, after a pause, "his manner is changed of late."

"How do you mean?" asked Cashel, hurriedly.

"He seems anxious, Sir—uneasy, as one might say."

"I have not perceived it."

"His man says——"

"What care I for that," said Cashel, impatiently. "It is not to pry into Mr. Linton's habits that I am here; it is to assure myself that no accident has happened to him, and that, if he stand in need of my assistance, I shall not be neglecting him. Tell two of the grooms to take horses, and ride down to Killaloe and Dunkeeran, and ask at the inns there if he has been seen. Let them make inquiry, too, along the road." With these directions, hastily given, he returned to the drawing-room; his mind far more interested in the event than he knew how to account for.

"No tidings of Tom?" said Lord Charles Frobisher, lounging carelessly in a well-cushioned chair.

Cashel made a sign in the negative.

"Well, it's always a satisfaction to his friends to know that he'll not come to harm," said he, with an ambiguous smile.

"The country is much disturbed at this moment," said the Chief Justice; "the calendar was a very heavy one last Assize. I trust no marauding party may have laid hold of him."

"Ah, yes; that would be very sad indeed," sighed Meek, "mistaking him for a spy."

"No great blunder, after all," said Lady Janet, almost loud enough for other ears than her next neighbour's.

"If the night were moonlight," said Miss Meek, as she opened a shutter and peeped out into the darkness, "I'd say he was trying those fences we have laid out for the hurdle-race."

"By Jove, Jim, that is a shrewed thought!" said Lord Charles, forgetting that he was addressing her by a familiar sobriquet he never used before company.

"You have a bet with him, Charley?" said Upton.

"Yes, we have all manner of bets on the race, and I'll have one with you, if you like it—an even fifty that Tom turns up 'all right and no accident,' after this bolt."

"Ah, my Lord, you're in the secret, then!" said Aunt Fanny, whose ex-

periences of sporting transactions derived from "the West," induced her to suspect that a wager contained a trap-fall.

A very cool stare was the only acknowledgment he deigned to return to this speech, while Mrs. Kennyfeck looked unutterable reproaches at her unhappy relative.

"I call the present company to witness," said Sir Harvey Upton, "that if Tom has come to an untimely end, he has bequeathed to me his brown cob pony, 'Batter.'"

"I protest against the gift," said Miss Kennyfeck. "Mr. Linton told me, if he were killed in the steeple-chase on Tuesday next, I should have 'Batter.'"

"That was a special reservation, Miss Kennyfeck," said the Chief Justice; "so that if his death did not occur in the manner specified, the deed or gift became null and void."

"I only know," said Miss Meek, "that Mr. Linton said, as we came back from the hurdle-field—'Remember, "Batter" is yours, if—if——'" She hesitated and grew red, and then stopped speaking, in evident shame and confusion.

"If what? tell us the condition; you are bound to be candid," said several voices together.

"I'll tell *you*, but I'll not tell any one else," said the young girl, turning to Lady Kilgoff; and at the same instant she whispered in her ear, "If I were to be married to Mr. Cashel."

"Well," said her Ladyship, laughing, "and was the bribe sufficient?"

"I should think not!" replied she, with a scornful toss of the head, as she walked back to her seat.

"I winna say," said Sir Andrew, "but I ha' a bit claim mysel to that bonnie snuff-box he ca'd a Louis-Quatorze; if ye mind, Leddies, I asked him to mak' me a present o' it, and he replied—'In my weell, Sir Andrew; I'll leave it ye in my weell.'"

"I foresee there will be abundance of litigation," said the Chief Justice, "for the claims are both numerous and conflicting."

"You'll not be troubled with the next of kin, I believe," said Lady Janet, in her most spiteful of voices.

"I say, my Lord Chief Justice," said Frobisher, "let me have a travelling opinion from you, on a legal point. Wouldn't Linton's heirs, or representatives, or whatever they're called, be bound to 'book up' if Ramskin is beaten in the handicap?"

"The law expressly declares such transactions without its pale, my Lord," said the Judge, rebukingly.

"Well, I can only say," interrupted Upton, "that when we were in can-

tournaments at Sickmabund, Jack Faris 'of ours' had a heavy stake in a game of piquet with the Major, and just as he was going to count his point, he gave a tremendous yell, and jumped up from the table. It was a cobra capella had bitten him in the calf of the leg. Everything was done for him at once, but all in vain; he swelled up to the size of four, and died in about two hours. It was rather hard on old Cox, the Major, who had two hundred pounds on it, and a capital hand; and so he made a representation to the Mess, showing that he had seven cards to his point, with a quint in hearts; that, taking in the ace of clubs, he should count a quatorze, and, therefore, unquestionably win the game. The thing was clear as day, and so they awarded him the stakes. Cox behaved very handsomely, too; for he said, 'If Faris's widow likes to play the game out, I'll give her the opportunity when we get back to England, and back myself, two to one.'"

"The Chevalier Bayard himself could not have done more," said Miss Kennyfeck, with admirable gravity.

"I must say," resumed the dragoon, "we thought it handsome, for old Cox was always hard up for money."

"And what is to become of our theatricals, if Mr. Linton should have been so ill-natured as to drown himself?" said Mrs. White, in a most disconsolate tone; for she had already made terrible havoc in her wardrobe to accomplish a Turkish costume.

"Such a disappointment as it will be," sighed Olivia Kennyfeck, who had speculated on a last effort upon Cashel in a Mexican dress, where, certes, superfluity should not be the fault.

"You can always make some compensation for the disappointment," said Lady Kilgoff, "by a fancy ball."

"Oh, delightful! the very thing!" exclaimed several together. "When shall it be, Mr. Cashel?"

"I am entirely at your orders," said he, bowing courteously.

"Shall we say Tuesday, then?"

"Not Tuesday; we have the race on that morning," said Frobisher; "and some of us, at least, will be too tired for a ball afterwards."

"Well, Wednesday; is Wednesday open?"

"Wednesday was fixed for a boat excursion to Holy Island," said Cashel.

"You can't have Thursday, then," exclaimed Lady Janet; "that is the only evening we ever have our rubber. I'll not give you Thursday."

"Friday we are to have some people at dinner," said Cashel; "and Saturday was to have been some piece of electioneering festivity for Linton's constituents."

"What matter now," said Mrs. White; "perhaps the poor dear man is

in a better place; a very sad thought," sighed she, "but such things are happening every day."

"Ah, yes, very sad," responded Meek, who never failed to perform echo to any one's lamentation.

"Ah, indeed!" chimed in Aunt Fanny, "cut off like a daisy." And she wiped her eyes and looked solemn, for she believed she was quoting Scripture.

At last it was decided that the ball should come off on the earliest evening possible, irrespective of all other arrangements; and now the company formed in a great circle, discussing dresses and characters and costumes with an eager interest, that showed how little Linton's fate had thrown a shadow over the bright picture of anticipated pleasure.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE REASON OF LINTON'S FLITTING.

He could outrogue a lawyer.
OLDHAM.

REVEALING so freely as we do the hidden wiles of our characters for the reader's pleasure, it would ill become us to affect any reserve or mystery regarding their actions. We shall not make, therefore, any secret of Mr. Linton's absence, nor ask of our patient reader to partake of the mystification that prevailed among the company at Tubbermore.

It so chanced, that on the evening preceding his departure he saw in a newspaper paragraph the arrival of a very distinguished lawyer at Limerick on his way to Dublin, and the thought at once occurred to him, that the opportunity was most favourable for obtaining an opinion respecting the "Corrigan Pardon," without incurring either suspicion or any lengthened absence.

Another object, inferior, but not devoid of interest, also suggested itself. It was this: profiting by a secret passage which led from the theatre to Cashel's bedroom, it was Linton's custom to visit this chamber every day, ransacking the letters and papers which, in his careless indolence, Roland left loose upon the tables, and thus possessing himself of the minutest knowledge of Cashel's affairs. In his very last visit to this room, he perceived a cumbrous document, of which the seal on the envelope was broken, but apparently the contents unlooked at. It was enough that he read the

endorsement, "Deed of Conveyance of the Cottage and Lands of Tubber-beg."

Feeling how far he himself was interested in the paper, and well knowing the forgetful habits of Cashel, who would never detect its removal, he coolly folded it up and carried it away.

At first, his intention was simply to peruse the paper at his ease, and, if need were, to show it in confidence to Corrigan, and thus establish for himself that degree of influence over the old man which the character of his landlord might convey. But another and a bolder expedient soon suggested itself to his mind—nor was he one to shrink from an enterprise merely on account of its hazard—and this was no less than to forge Cashel's signature to the deed—for, as yet, it was wanting in that most essential particular.

That Roland would never remember anything of the matter, and that he would always incline to believe his own memory defective, than suppose such a falsification possible, Linton was well convinced. There was but one difficulty: how should he manage for the witnesses, whose names were to be appended, as actually present at the moment of signing. Here was a stumbling-block—since he could scarcely hope to find others as short of memory as was Roland Cashel. It was while still canvassing the question in his mind that he came upon the intelligence in the newspaper of the lawyer's arrival at Limerick, and suddenly it struck him that he could easily in that city find out two persons, who, for a sufficient consideration, would append their signatures to the deed. A little further reflection devised even an easier plan, which was to take along with him the Italian sailor Giovanni, and make him represent Cashel, whose appearance was quite unknown. By Giovanni's personation of Roland, Linton escaped all the hazard of letting others into his confidence, while the sailor himself, in a few days more, would leave the country—never to return.

It was with the calm assurance of a man who could put a price upon any action required of him, that Giovanni found himself, an hour after midnight, summoned to Linton's dressing-room.

"I told you some time back, Giovanni, that we might be serviceable to each other. The hour has come a little earlier than I looked for; and now the question is, are you of the same mind as you then were?"

"I know nothing of the laws of this country, Signor, but if there be life on the issue——"

"No, no, nothing like that, my worthy fellow. In the present case, all I ask for is your silence and your secrecy."

"Oh, that is easily had—go on, Signor."

"Well, I wish to go over to-morrow by daybreak to Limerick. I desire, too, that you should accompany me—as my companion, however, and my equal. We are about the same height and size, so take that suit there, dress yourself, and wait for me at the cross-roads below the village."

The Italian took the parcel without speaking, and was about to retire, when Linton said:

"You can write, I suppose?"

The other nodded.

"I shall want you to sign a document in presence of witnesses—not your own name, but another, which I'll tell you."

The Italian's dark eyes flashed with a keen and subtle meaning, and leaning forward, he said, in a low, distinct tone,

"His Excellency means that I should forge a name?"

"It is scarcely deserving so grave a phrase," replied Linton, affecting an easy smile; "but what I ask amounts pretty much to that. Have you scruples about it?"

"My scruples are not easily alarmed, Signor; only let us understand each other. I'll do *anything*"—and he laid a deep emphasis on the word—"when I see my way clear before me, nothing, when I'm blindfolded."

"A man after my own heart!" cried Linton; "and now, good night. Be true to the time and place." And with this they parted.

The grey mist of a winter morning was just clearing away as Linton, accompanied by Giovanni, drove up to the principal hotel of Limerick, where Mr. Hammond, the eminent barrister, was then stopping. Having ascertained that he was still in the house, Linton at once sent up his name, with a request to be admitted to an interview with him. The position he had so long enjoyed among the officials of the Viceroy had made Linton a person of considerable importance in a city where the "plated article" so often passes for silver; and no sooner had the lawyer read the name, than he immediately returned a polite answer, saying that he was perfectly at Mr. Linton's orders.

The few inquiries which Mr. Linton had meanwhile made at the bar of the hotel, informed him that Mr. Hammond was making all haste to England, where he was about to appear in a case before the House of Lords; that horses had been already ordered for him along the whole line of road, and his presence in London was imperative. Armed with these facts, Linton entered the room, where, surrounded with deeds, drafts, and Acts of Parliament, the Learned Counsel was sitting at his breakfast.

"It was but last night late, Mr. Hammond," said he, advancing with his very frankest manner, "that we caught sight of your name as having arrived

here, and you see I have lost no time in profiting by the intelligence. have come thirty Irish miles this day to catch and carry you off with me to Mr. Cashel's, at Tubbermore."

"Most kind, indeed—very flattering—I am really overpowered," said the lawyer, actually reddening with pleasure; and he said the exact truth, he was "overpowered" by a compliment so little expected. For, although high in his profession, and in considerable repute among his brethren, he had never been admitted into that peculiar class which calls itself the first society of the metropolis.

"I assure you," resumed Linton, "it was by a vote of the whole house I undertook my mission. The Kilgoffs, the MacFarlines, the Chief Justice, Meek, and—in fact, all your friends are there—and we only want *you* to make the party complete."

"I cannot express the regret—the very deep regret—I feel at being obliged to decline such an honour; one which, I am free to confess, actually takes me by surprise. But, my dear Mr. Linton, you see these weighty papers—that formidable heap yonder——"

"Meek said so," said Linton, interrupting, and at the same time assuming a look of deep despondency. "'Hammond will refuse,' said he. 'There's no man at the Irish Bar has the same amount of business; he cannot give his friends even one hour from his clients.'"

"I'm sure I scarcely suspected the Right Honourable Secretary knew of me," said Hammond, blushing between pleasure and shame.

"Downie not know of you!—not know Mr. Hammond!—come, come—this may do for a bit of quiz in those Irish newspapers that are always affecting to charge English officials with ignorance of the distinguished men, here; but I cannot permit Mr. Hammond himself to throw out the aspersion, nor, indeed, can I suffer Meek, one of my oldest friends, to lie under the obloquy. I need not tell one so much more capable of appreciating these things than myself, how every administration comes into office with a host of followers far more eager for place, and infinitely more confident of high deservings, than the truly capable men of the party. These 'locusts' eat up the first harvest, but, happily for humanity, they rarely live for a second."

Linton leaned back in his chair, and appeared to be taking counsel with himself, and at length, as if having formed his resolve, said,

"Of course frankness with such a man is never a mistaken policy." And with this muttered soliloquy again became silent.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### FORGERY.

**It was not "Flattery," he sold, but "Hope."**
BELL.

We left Mr. Linton and Mr. Hammond seated opposite each other, the former lost in seeming reflection, the latter awaiting with eager expectancy for something which might explain the few strange words he had just listened to.

"May I venture on a bit of confidence, Mr. Hammond," said Linton, clearing his brow as he spoke; "you'll never betray me?"

"Never—on my honour."

"Never, willingly, I well know; but I mean, will you strictly keep what I shall tell you—for yourself alone—because, as I am the only depositary of the fact, it would be inevitable ruin to me if it got about?"

"I give you my solemn pledge—I promise."

"Quite enough—well——" Here he leaned on the other's shoulder, and putting his lips close to his ear, said: "Malone will retire—Repton will be Chief—and"—here he prodded the listener with his finger—"Attorney-General."

"You mean me, Sir—do you mean that I am to be Attor——"

"Hush!" said Linton, in a long low note; "do not breathe it, even in your sleep! If I know these things, it is because I am trusted in quarters where men of far more influence are hoodwinked. Were I once to be suspected of even this much, it would be 'up' with me for ever."

"My dear friend—will you pardon me for calling you so?—I'd suffer the torture of the rack before I'd divulge one syllable of it. I own to you, my family, and my friends in general, have not been patient under what they deemed the Government neglect of me."

"And with too good reason, Sir," said Linton, assuming the look and air of a moraliser. "And do you know why you have been passed over, Mr. Hammond? I'll tell you, Sir; because your talents were too brilliant, and your integrity too spotless, for promotion, in times when inferior capacities and more convenient consciences were easier tools to handle!—Because you are not a man who, once placed in a conspicuous position, can be consigned to darkness and neglect when his capabilities have been proved

to the world!—Because your knowledge, Sir, your deep insight into the political condition of this country, would soon have placed you above the heads of the very men who appointed you. But times are changed: capable men, zealous men—ay, Sir, and I will say, great men—are in request now. The Public *will* have them, and Ministers can no longer either overlook their claim or ignore their merit. You may rely upon it; I see something of what goes on behind the scenes of the great State drama, and be assured that a new era is about to dawn on the really able men of this country."

"Your words have given me a degree of encouragement, Mr. Linton, that I was very far from ever expecting to receive. I have often deplored—not on my own account, I pledge my honour—but I have grieved for others, whom I have seen here, unnoticed and undistinguished by successive Governments."

"Well, there is an end of the system now, and it was time!" said Linton, solemnly. "But to come back. Is there no chance of stealing you away, even for a couple of days?"

"Impossible, my dear Mr. Linton. The voluminous mass of evidence yonder relates to an appeal case, in which I am to appear before 'the Lords.' It is a most important suit; and I am at this very moment on my way to London, to attend a consultation with the Solicitor-General."

"How unfortunate!—for *us*, I mean—for, indeed, your client cannot join in the plaint. By the way, your mention of 'the Lords' reminds me of a very curious circumstance. You are aware of the manner in which my friend Cashel succeeded to this great estate here?"

"Yes. I was consulted on a point of law in it, and was present at the two trials."

"Well, a most singular discovery has been made within the last few days. I suppose you remember that the property had been part of a confiscated estate, belonging to an old Irish family, named Corrigan?"

"I remember perfectly—a very fine old man, that used to be well known at Daly's Club, long ago."

"The same. Well, this old gentleman has been always under the impression, that shortly after the accession of George III. the Act of Confiscation was repealed, and a full pardon granted to his ancestors for the part they had taken in the events of the time."

"I never knew the descendants of one of those 'confiscated' families who had not some such hallucination," said Hammond, laughing; "they cling to the straw, like the drowning man."

"Exactly," said Linton. "I quite agree with you. In the present case, however, the support is better than a straw; for there is an actual *bonâ fide*

document extant, purporting to be the very pardon in question, signed by the King, and bearing the royal seal."

"Where is this? In whose possession?" said Hammond, eagerly.

Linton did not heed the question, but continued:

"By a very singular coincidence, the discovery is not of so much moment as it might be; because, as Cashel is about to marry the old man's granddaughter—his sole heiress—no change in the destination of the estate would ensue, even supposing Corrigan's title to be all that he ever conceived it. However, Cashel is really anxious on the point: he feels scruples about making settlements and so forth, with the consciousness that he may be actually disposing of what he has no real claim to. He is a sensitive fellow; and yet he dreads, on the other side, the kind of exposure that would ensue in the event of this discovery becoming known. The fact is, his own ancestors were little better than bailiffs on the estate; and the inference from this new-found paper would lead one to say, not over-honest stewards besides."

"But if this document be authentic, Mr. Linton, Cashel's title is not worth sixpence."

"That is exactly what I'm coming to," said Linton, who, the reader may have already perceived, was merely inventing a case regarding a marriage, the better to learn from the counsel the precise position the estate would stand in towards Mary Leicester's husband. "If this document be authentic, Cashel's title is invalid. Now, what would constitute its authenticity?"

"Several circumstances: the registry of the pardon in the State Paper Office—the document itself, bearing the unmistakable evidences of its origin—the signature and seal—in fact, it could not admit of much doubt when submitted to examination."

"I told Cashel so," said Linton. "I said to him, 'My opinion unquestionably is that the pardon is genuine; but,' said I, 'when we have Hammond here, he shall see it, and decide the question.'"

"Ah! that is impossible——"

"So I perceive," broke in Linton; "we then hoped otherwise."

"Why didn't you bring it over with you?"

"So I did," said Linton; "here it is." And, opening a carefully-folded envelope, he placed the important document in the lawyer's hands.

Hammond spread it out upon the table, and sat down to read it over carefully, while Linton, to afford the more time to the scrutiny, took the opportunity of descending to his breakfast.

He stopped as he passed the bar to say a few words to the landlord—one of those easy speeches he knew so well how to make about the "state of

trade," "what travellers were passing," and "how the prospect looked for the coming season"—and then, when turning away, as if suddenly recollecting himself, said:

"By the way, Swindon, you are a cautious fellow, that a man may trust with a secret—you know who the gentleman is that came with me?"

"No, Sir; never saw him before. Indeed, I did not remark him closely."

"All the better, Swindon. He does not fancy anything like scrutiny. He is Mr. Roland Cashel."

"Of Tubbermore, Sir?"

"The same. Hush, man—be cautious! He has come up here about a little law business on which he desired to consult Mr. Hammond, and now we have a document for signature, if you could only find us another person equally discreet with yourself to be the witness, for these kind of things, when they get about in the world, are misrepresented in a thousand ways. Do you happen to have any confidential man here would suit us?"

"If my head-waiter, Sir, Mr. Nipkin, would do; he writes an excellent hand, and is a most reserved, cautious young man."

"Perfectly, Swindon; he'll do perfectly. Will you join us up-stairs, where my friend is in waiting? Pray, also, give Nipkin a hint not to bestow any undue attention on Mr. Cashel, who wants to be *incog.* so far as may be; as for yourself, Swindon, no hint is necessary."

A graceful bow from the landlord acknowledged the compliment, and he hastened to give the necessary orders, while Linton continued his way to the apartment where the Italian awaited him.

"Impatient for breakfast, I suppose, Giovanni?" said Linton, gaily, as he entered. "Well, sit down, and let us begin. Already I have done more than half the business which brought me here, and we may be on our way back within an hour."

Giovanni seated himself at the table without any of that constraint a sense of inferiority enforces, and began his breakfast in silence.

"You understand," said Linton, "that when you have written the name 'Roland Cashel,' and are asked if that be your act and deed, you have simply to say 'Yes;' a bow—a mere nod, indeed—is sufficient."

"I understand," said he, thoughtfully, as if reflecting over the matter with himself. "I conclude, then," added he, after a pause, "that the sooner I leave the country afterwards, the better—I mean the safer—for me."

"As to any positive danger," said Linton, affecting an easy carelessness, "there is none. The document is merely a copy of one already signed by Mr. Cashel, but which I have mislaid, and I am so ashamed of my negligence I cannot bring myself to confess it."

This tame explanation Linton was unable to finish without faltering, for the Italian's keen and piercing dark eyes seemed to penetrate into him as he was speaking.

"With this I have nothing to do," said he, abruptly. "It is quite clear, however, that Giovanni Santini is not Roland Cashel; nor, if there be a penalty on what I have done, am I so certain that he whose name I shall have forged will undergo it in my place."

"You talk of forgery and penalties as if we were about to commit a felony," said Linton, laughing. "Pray give me the cream. There is really no such peril in the case, and if there were, it would be all mine."

"I know nothing of your laws here—I desire to know nothing of them," said the Italian, haughtily; "but if it should be my lot to be arraigned, let it be for something more worthy of manhood. I'll sign the paper, but I shall leave the country at once."

No words could have been more grateful to Linton's ears than these. He was, even at that very moment, considering in his own mind in what way to disembarrass himself of his "friend" when this service should have been effected.

"As you please, Giovanni," said he, gravely. "I regret to part company so soon with one whose frankness so well accords with my own humour."

The Italian's lips parted slightly, and a smile of cold and dubious meaning flitted across his dark features.

"We part here, then," said he, rising from the table. "There is a vessel leaves this for Bristol at noon to-day. It is already past eleven o'clock."

"I'll not delay," said Linton, rising and ringing the bell; "send Mr. Swindon here," said he to the waiter, while he opened a parchment document upon the table, and after hastily glancing over it, folded it carefully again, leaving uppermost the margin, where certain pencil marks indicated the places of signature. "This is yours, Giovanni, said he, placing a weighty purse in the Italian's hand, who took it with all the easy indifference of one whose feelings of shame were not too acute. "Remember what I have——"

There was no time to finish, for already a light tap was heard at the door, and the landlord, followed by the head-waiter, entered.

"We are pressed for time, Swindon," said Linton, as he examined the pens, which, like all hotel ones, seemed invented for ruling music paper, "and have sent for you to witness the signature to this document. Here, Cashel, you are to sign here," said he, turning to Giovanni, who had just lighted a cigar, and was smoking away with all imaginable coolness. The Italian took the pen, and with a bold and steady hand wrote the words "Roland Cashel."

"Mr. Swindon at this side; Mr. Nipkin's name comes underneath."

"You acknowledge this for your hand and seal, Sir?" said Swindon, turning towards Giovanni.

"I do," said the Italian, in an accent which did not betray the slightest emotion, nor any trace of foreign pronunciation.

"All right; thank you, Swindon—thanks, Mr. Nipkin," said Linton, as, with an elation of countenance all his efforts could not suppress, he folded up the parchment; "and now, will you order my horses at once?"

The landlord and the waiter left the room, and Linton found himself once more alone with Giovanni; the only consolation he felt being that it was for the last time. There was a pause, in which each gazed steadily at the other without a word. At last, with a long-drawn sigh, Giovanni exclaimed:

"Perdio! but it is hard to do." And with this he pressed his hat upon his brows, and waving a careless farewell with his hand, walked out, leaving Linton in a state of amazement not altogether unmingled with fear. Tom watched the tall and stalwart figure of the foreigner as he moved through the crowd that filled the quay, and it was with a sense of relief he could not explain to himself that he saw him cross the plank that led to the steamer, on whose deck numerous passengers were already assembled. The bell rang out in warning of her approaching departure, and Linton kept his eyes intently fixed upon the one figure, which towered above the others around him. Already the scene of bustle portended the moment of starting, and some were hastening on board, as others, with not less eagerness, were endeavouring to get on shore; when, just at that instant, the landlord's voice was heard.

"Mr. Hammond is just going off, Sir; he wants to say one word to you before he goes."

Mr. Hammond had just taken his seat in his carriage, and sat with one hand upon the door, awaiting Linton's coming.

"I am run sharp for time, Mr. Linton," cried he, "and have not a second to lose. I wish sincerely I could have given a little more time to that document—not indeed that any feature of difficulty exists in forming an opinion, only that I believe I could have put your friend on the safe road as to his future course."

"You regard it then as authentic—as a good and valid instrument?" said Linton, in a low but eager voice.

"So much so," said Hammond, lowering his tone to a mere whisper, "that if he does not marry the young lady in question, I would not give him twenty shillings for his title."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Linton, leaning his head on the door of the car-

riage, as if to conceal his chagrin, but in reality to hide the exuberance of his joy; "and this is your candid opinion of the case?"

"I am willing to stake my fame as a lawyer on the issue; for, remember, the whole history of the suit is familiar to me; I recollect well the flaws in the course of proofs adduced, and I see how this discovery reconciles each discrepancy, and supplies every missing link of the chain."

"Poor fellow—it will be a sad blow for him," said Linton, with admirably feigned emotion.

"But it need not, Mr. Linton. The church can tie a knot not even an equity suit can open. Let him marry."

"Ay, if he will."

"Tell him he must; tell him what I now tell you, that this girl is the greatest heiress in the land, and that he is a beggar. Plain speaking, Mr. Linton, but time is short. Good-by."

"One word more. Is the document of such a nature that leaves him no case whatever? Is all the ground cut away beneath his feet?"

"Every inch of it. Once more, good-by. Here is your parchment; keep it safely; there are few men in this city hold in their hands a paper of such moment."

"I'll take good care of it," said Linton, sententiously; "and so good-by, and a safe journey to you. I'll not forget our conversation of this morning. Meek shall hear of it before I sleep to-night. Adieu."

"The richest heiress in the land, and Cashel a beggar," repeated Linton, slowly, to himself, as the carriage drove off. "Charley Frobisher would say, 'Hedge on the double event,' but I'll keep my book." And, with this slang reflection, he sauntered into the inn to wait for his horses.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### ROLAND DISCOVERS THAT HE HAS OVERDRAWN.

——His counsel, like his physic,
If hard to take, was good when taken.

VILLAGE WORTHIES.

Long before the guests of Tubbermore were astir, Cashel sat in his library awaiting the arrival of Dr. Tiernay. In obedience to Roland's request, Mr. Kennyfeck was present, and affected to look over books or out of windows—to scan over prints or inspect maps—anything, in short, which should pass the time and shorten the interval of waiting—doubly awkward

from being the first moment he had been alone with Cashel since his arrival. Cashel was silent and absorbed, and, more intent upon following out the train of his own thoughts, never noticed the various arts by which Kennyfeck affected to interest himself. The Solicitor, too, bent from time to time a stealthy look on the young man, on whose features he had rarely seen the same traces of deep reflection.

At last, with a half start, as if suddenly awaking, Cashel sat up in his chair, and said:

"Have I explained to you what Dr. Tiernay's business is here this morning? It is to make a proposition from Mr. Corrigan for the sale of his interest in Tubber-beg. He wishes to leave the country and go abroad."

"His interest, Sir," replied Kennyfeck, calmly, "although more valuable to you than to any one else, must be a matter of small amount; for years back, he has done little more than vegetate on the property, without capital or skill to improve it."

"I'm not asking you to appraise it, just yet," said Roland, snappishly "I was simply informing you of the object of the gentleman's visit. It is the advantage of this purchase that I wished you to consider, not its cost."

"The cost will define the advantage, Sir," rejoined Kennyfeck, "particularly as the demand may be high, and the payment inconvenient."

"How do you mean, inconvenient?"

Kennyfeck hesitated. There was something in the hurried abruptness of the question, as well as in the excited expression of the questioner's face, that confused him; so that Cashel had time to repeat the words before he could reply.

"Is it that I am straitened for money?" said he, passionately.

"Not quite—that—Sir," replied Kennyfeck, stopping between every word. "You have resources—very great resources—untouched, and you have considerable sums in foreign securities, intact——"

"Never mind these," broke in Roland, hurriedly. "How do we stand with those London fellows?"

Kennyfeck shook his head gravely, but without speaking.

"I pray you, Sir," said Roland, in a voice of hardly suppressed passion, "keep pantomime for another moment, or a keener interpreter of it, and condescend, in plain English, to answer me my last question."

"There is no difficulty with Bigger and Swain, Sir," said Kennyfeck, as his cheek grew slightly red. "They will neither be pressing for a settlement, nor exacting when making it; besides, you have not overdrawn very heavily after all."

"Overdrawn, said you?—did you say overdrawn, Mr. Kennyfeck?"

"Yes, Sir. In the account last forwarded, your debit was eleven thou-

said four hundred and forty pounds; since that you have drawn—but not for any large amount."

"Overdrawn!" repeated Cashel, as though his thoughts had never wandered beyond the first shock of that fact; then rallying into something like his habitual easy humour, he said, "I am, I need not tell you, the stupidest man of business that ever breathed, so pray forgive me if I ask you once more if I understood you aright that I have not only expended all the money I owned in these people's hands, but actually had contracted a debt to them?"

"That is the case, Sir," said Kennyfeck, gravely.

A deep groan broke from Cashel, and he sat silent and still.

"I would wish to observe, Sir," said Kennyfeck, who was shocked at the alteration a few moments had made in the young man's countenance—"I would wish to observe, Sir, that if you desire a sum of money for any purpose——"

"Stay—let me interrupt you here," said Cashel, laying his hand on Kennyfeck's arm, and using a tone whose earnest distinctness thrilled through his hearer's heart; "I should deceive you, were you to suppose that it is the want of money gives me the pain I am now suffering. That I had believed myself rich a few moments back, and now found myself a beggar, could not give one-thousandth part of that suffering which I feel here. I have braved poverty in every form, and I could brave it again; but I'll tell you what it is that now cuts me to the soul, and lowers me to myself. It is that, in a senseless, heartless career, I should have squandered the wealth by which I once imagined I was to bless and succour hundreds. It is to think, that of all the gold I have wasted, not one memory has been purchased of a sick-bed consoled, a suffering lessened, a sinking spirit encouraged—I have done nothing, actually nothing, save pamper vice and sensual heartlessness. I came to this kingdom a few months back, my very dreams filled with schemes of benevolence. I felt as if this wealth were given to me that I might show the world how much of good may be done by one who, having experienced narrow fortune, should best know how to relieve it in others; and now, here am I, the wealth and the high aspirations alike departed, with no tradition to carry away, save of a life passed in debauch, the friendship of worthless, the pitying contempt of good men! Hear me out. I was nurtured in no school of sentiment; I belonged to a class who had too little time or taste to indulge in scruples. We were reckless, passionate—cruel, if you will—but we were not bad in cold blood; we seldom hated long; we never could turn on a benefactor. These are not the lessons I've lived to learn here! It is over, however—it is past now! I'll go back to the old haunts, and the old comrades. It will g

hard with me if I quarrel with their rude speech and rough demeanour. I'll think of *gentlemen!* and be grateful."

The rapid utterance in which he poured forth these words, and the fervid excitement of his manner, abashed Kennyfeck, and deterred him from reply. Cashel was the first to speak.

"This arrangement, however, must be provided for; whatever Mr. Corrigan's interest be worth—or rather, whatever he will accept in lieu of it—I insist upon his having. But I see Dr. Tiernay coming up to the door; we can talk of these things at another time."

When Tiernay entered the library he was heated with his walk, and his face betrayed unmistakable signs of recent irritation; indeed, he did not long conceal the reason.

"Is it true, Mr. Cashel, that Mr. Linton is your nominee for the borough of Derraheeny?"

"Yes; what of that?"

"Why, that he canvasses the constituency in a fashion we have not yet been accustomed to; at least *your* tenants, of whom I am one, are told that our votes are the condition on which our leases will receive renewal; that you will not brook opposition in any one who holds under you. Are these your sentiments, Mr. Cashel, or only his?"

"Not mine, assuredly," replied Cashel, gravely.

"I said as much. I told several of my neighbours that if this mode of canvass had your sanction, it was from not knowing the privileges of an elector."

"I neither sanctioned nor knew of it," rejoined Cashel, eagerly.

"So much the better—at least for me," said Tiernay, seating himself at the breakfast-table, "for I shall not lose a good breakfast, as I should have been forced to do had these been your intentions."

"I would observe, Doctor Tiernay," interposed Kennyfeck, mildly, "that the borough, being entirely the property of Mr. Cashel, its charities maintained by his bounty, and its schools supported at his cost, he has a fair claim on the gratitude of those who benefit by his benevolence."

"Let him stand himself for the borough, and we'll not deny the debt," said Tiernay, roughly; "but if for every ten he should expend a hundred, ay, Sir, or a thousand, on the village, I'd not vote for Mr. Linton."

"Most certainly, Doctor; I'd never seek to coerce you," said Cashel, smiling.

"Labour lost, Sir. I am your tenant for a holding of twenty-two pounds a year. I have never been in arrear; you, consequently, have not granted me any favour, save that of extending your acquaintance to me. Now, Sir except that you are a rich man and I a poor one, how is even that con

descension on your part a favour? and how could *you* purpose, upon it, to ask me to surrender my right of judgment on an important point, to you, who, from your high station, your rank and influence, have a thousand prerogatives, while *I* have but this one?"

"I never heard the just influence of the landed proprietor disputed before," said Kennyfeck, who felt outraged at the Doctor's hardihood.

"It is only *just* influence, Sir," said Tiernay, "when he who wields it is an example, as much by his life, as by the exercise of an ability that commands respect. Show me a man at the head of a large property extending the happiness of his tenantry, succouring the sick, assisting the needy, spreading the blessings of his own knowledge among those who have neither leisure nor opportunity to acquire it for themselves. Let me see him, while enjoying to the fullest the bounteous gifts that are but the portion of few in this world, not forgetful of those whose life is toil, and whose struggle is for mere existence. Let me not know the landlord only by his liveries and his equipage, his fox-hounds, his plate, his racers, and his sycophants."

"Hard hitting, Doctor!" cried Cashel, interrupting.

"Not if you can take it so good-humouredly," said Tiernay; "not if it only lose me the honour of ever entering here, and teach you to reflect on these things."

"You mistake me much," said Cashel, "if you judge me so narrowly."

"I did not think thus meanly of you; nor, if I did, would it have stopped me. I often promised myself, that if I could but eat of a rich man's salt, I'd tell him my mind, while under the protection of his hospitality. I have paid my debt now; and so, no more of it. Kennyfeck could tell you better than I, if it be not, in part at least, deserved. All this splendour that dazzles our eyes—all this luxury, that makes the contrast of our poverty the colder—all this reckless waste, that is like an unfeeling jest upon our small thrift, is hard to bear when we see it, not the pastime of an idle hour, but the business of a life. You can do far better things than these, and be happier as well as better for doing them! And now, Sir, are you in the mood to discuss my friend's project?"

"Perfectly so, Doctor; you have only to speak your sentiments on the matter before Mr. Kennyfeck; my concurrence is already with you."

"We want you to buy our interest in Tubber-beg," said the Doctor, drawing his chair in front of Kennyfeck; "and though you tell us that flower-plats and hollies, laurustinus and geraniums, are not wealth, we'll insist on your remunerating us for some share of the cost. The spot is a sweet one, and will improve your demesne. Now, what's it worth?"

"There are difficulties which may preclude any arrangement," said Kenny

feck, gravely. "There was a deed of gift of this very property made out, and only awaiting Mr. Cashel's signature."

"To whom?" said Tiernay, gasping with anxiety.

"To Mr. Linton."

"The very thing I feared," said the old man, dropping his head sorrowfully.

"It is easily remedied, I fancy," said Cashel. "It was a hasty promise given to afford him qualification for Parliament. I'll give him something of larger value. I know he'll not stand in our way here."

"How you talk of giving, Sir! You should have been the Good Fairy of a nursery tale, and not a mere man of acres and bank-notes. But have your own way. It's only anticipating the crash a month or so; ruined you must be!"

"Is that so certain," said Cashel, half smiling, half seriously.

"Ask Mr. Kennyfeck, there, whose highest ambition half a year ago was to be your agent, and now he'd scarcely take you for a son-in-law! Don't look so angry, man; what I said is but an illustration. It will be with your property as it was with your pleasure-boat t'other day; you'll never know you've struck till you're sinking."

"You affect to have a very intimate knowledge of Mr. Cashel's affairs, Sir," said Kennyfeck, who was driven beyond all further endurance.

"Somewhat more than you possess, Mr. Kennyfeck; for I know his tenantry. Not as you know them, from answering to their names at rent-day, but from seeing them in seasons of distress and famine,—from hearing their half-uttered hopes that better days were coming when the new landlord himself was about to visit them,—from listening to their sanguine expectations of benefits,—and now, within some few days, from hearing the low mutterings of their discontent—the prelude of worse than that."

"I have seen nothing else than the same scenes for forty years, but I never remember the people more regular in their payments," said the Attorney.

"Well, don't venture among the Drumcoologhan boys alone; that, at least, I would recommend you," said the Doctor, menacingly.

"Why not?—who are they?—where are these fellows?" cried Cashel, for danger was a theme that never failed to stir his heart.

"Its a bad barony, Sir," said Kennyfeck, solemnly.

"A district that has supplied the gallows and the convict-ship for many a year; but we are wandering away from the theme we ought to discuss," interposed Tiernay, "and the question narrows itself to this: if this property is still yours—if you have not already consigned it to another—what is my friend's interest worth?"

"That will require calculation and reflection.'

"Neither, Mr. Kennyfeck," broke in Cashel. "Learn Mr. Corrigan's expectations, and see that they are complied with?"

"My friend desired a small annuity on the life of his granddaughter."

"Be it an annuity, then," replied Cashel.

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Tiernay, as if he could not restrain the impulse that worked within him, "you are a fine-hearted fellow. Here, Sir," said he, taking a paper from his pocket—"here is a document, which my poor friend sat up half the night to write, but which I'd half made up my mind never to give you. You'd never guess what it is, nor your keen friend either, but I'll spare you the trouble of spelling it over. It's a renunciation of Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., for himself and his heirs for ever, of all right, direct or contingent, to the estate of Tubbermore, once the family property of his ancestors for eleven generations. You never heard of such a claim," said Tiernay, turning to Cashel, "but Mr. Kennyfeck did; he knows well the importance of that piece of paper he affects to treat with such indifference."

"And do you suppose, Sir, that if this claim you speak of be a good and valid one, I could, as a man of honour, maintain a possession to which I had no right? No; let Mr. Corrigan take back that paper; let him try his right, as the laws enable him. If I stand not here as the just owner of this house, I am ready to leave it at this instant; but I am neither to be intimidated by a threat nor conciliated by a compromise."

"Mr. Corrigan's claim has nothing to go upon, I assure you," broke in Kennyfeck. "If we accept the paper, it is by courtesy—to show that we respect the feeling that suggested it—nothing more."

While these words were addressed to Tiernay, Cashel, who had walked towards one of the windows, did not hear them.

"Well," cried Tiernay, after an awkward pause, "the devil a worse negotiator ever accepted a mission than myself! When I desire to be frank, the only truths that occur to me are sure to be offensive, and I never am so certain to insult as when I fancy I'm doing a favour. Good-by, Sir; pardon the liberties of an old man, whose profession has taught him to believe that remedies are seldom painless, and who, although a poor man, would rather any day lose the fee than the patient! You'll not treat Con Corrigan the less kindly because he has an imprudent friend. I'm sorry to think that I leave an unfavourable impression behind me; but I'm glad, heartily glad, I came here to breakfast, for I go away convinced of two things, that I was far from believing so certain when I entered"—he paused for a second or two, and then said—"that a spendthrift could have an unblemished sense of honour, and that an attorney could appreciate it!"

With these words he departed, while Cashel, after staring for a few moments at Kennyfeck, threw himself back in his chair, and laughed long and heartily.

"An original, Sir—quite an original!" said Kennyfeck, who, not exactly knowing whether to accept the Doctor's parting speech as a compliment, or the reverse, contented himself with this very vague expression.

"He's a fine old fellow, although he does lay on his salve in Indian fashion, with a scalping-knife; but I wish he'd not have said anything of that confounded paper."

"Pardon me, Sir," interposed Kennyfeck, taking it from his pocket, "but it might prove of inestimable value, in the event of any future litigation."

"What! you kept it, then?" cried Cashel.

"Of course I did, Sir. It is a document scarce inferior to a deed of title; for, although Mr. Corrigan has nothing to substantiate a claim at law, it is incontestable that his family were the original owners of this estate."

Cashel took the paper from Kennyfeck's hand, and seemed to peruse it for some minutes, and then approaching the fire he threw it into the blaze, and pressed it down with a poker till it was consumed; while Kennyfeck, too much consternated to utter a word, stood the personification of terror-struck astonishment.

"You have burnt it, Sir!" said he at last, in a whisper.

"Why not, Sir?" cried Cashel, rudely. "Should I have made use of it against the man who wrote it, or against his heirs, if by chance they should seek one day to dispute my right?"

A deep sigh was all the reply Kennyfeck could make.

"I understand your compassion well," said Cashel, scornfully. "You are right, Sir. It was the buccaneer, not the gentleman, spoke there; but I'm sick of masquerading, and I long for a little reality."

Without waiting for a reply, Roland left the room, and wandered out into the park.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

THE BURNT LETTER—"GREAT EXPECTATIONS."

"Like Dido's self," she said, "I'm free!
Trojan or Tyrian are alike to me."

THERE was but one species of tyranny Mr. Kennyfeck ever attempted in his family: this was, to shroud with a solemn mystery every little event in his professional career which he saw excited any curiosity with his wife and daughters. It was true that on such occasions he became a mark for most sneering insinuations and derisive commentaries, but he rose with the dignity of a martyr above all their taunts, and doubtless felt in his heart the supporting energy of a high-priest standing watch over the gate of the Temple.

The few pencilled lines by Cashel, which had summoned him to the meeting recorded in the last chapter, he threw into the fire as soon as he had read, and then arising from the breakfast-table, dryly observed,

"Don't wait breakfast, Mrs. Kennyfeck; I shall not be back for some time."

"Another secret, Mr. Kennyfeck," said his wife, scoffingly.

He only smiled in reply.

"It ought to be a duel, at least, Pa," said his eldest daughter, "from the urgent haste of your departure."

"Or a runaway couple, who wish to have the settlements——"

"Is that all you know of the matter, Livy?" said her sister, laughing heartily; "why, child, your Gretna Green folks never have settlements—never think of them till six months later, when they are wanting to separate."

"Is there any occasion for mystery in this case?" rejoined Mrs. Kennyfeck, haughtily.

"To be sure there may, my dear," broke in Aunt Fanny; "there's many a dirty thing the lawyers have to do they'd be ashamed to own before their families."

Even this did not move Mr. Kennyfeck, and although from the way he nestled his chin behind the folds of his white cravat, and a certain scarcely perceptible shake of the head, it was clear he longed to refute the foul aspersion,

"I suppose you will appear at dinner, Sir?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, with her grandest air.

"I hope so, Mrs. Kennyfeck," was the mild answer.

"Without you should take it into your head, Pa, to enter into rivalry with Mr. Linton, and stay away, Heaven knows where or how long," said Miss Kennyfeck.

Mr. Kennyfeck did not wait for more, but left the room with an air whose solemnity well suited any amount of secrecy.

"Is there a carriage at the door?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"No, Mamma; there are three saddle-horses—one with a side-saddle. That odious Miss Meek!" exclaimed Miss Kennyfeck; "what Lord Charles can see in her I cannot conceive. To be sure, she saves a stable-boy the more, and that to him is something."

"Has your father gone out by the back terrace?" resumed Mrs. Kennyfeck, one only theme occupying her thoughts.

Olivia retired into an adjoining room, and soon returned, saying,

"No, Ma; there's no one there, except Sir Andrew and Lady Janet, taking their morning walk."

"Their run, rather, my dear," chimed in Miss Kennyfeck, "for she chases the poor old man up and down with a cup of camomile tea, which either scalds or sets him a-coughing. I'm sure that tiresome old couple have awoke me every day the last week with their squabbling."

"Step down into the library, my love," said Mrs. Kennyfeck to her younger daughter, "and bring me up the *Post* or the *St. James's Chronicle*."

"And if you meet Phillis, just ask if he saw your father, for he forgot his gloves." And, suiting the action to the word, Aunt Fanny dived into a cavern of an apron-pocket, and drew out a pair of knitted things without fingers, which she offered to Olivia.

"Do no such thing, Miss Olivia Kennyfeck," said her Mamma, with an air of imposing grandeur.

"Ma wants the newspaper, Olivia, and is not thinking of Papa," said Miss Kennyfeck; and her eyes sparkled with a malicious fun she well knew how to enjoy.

As Miss Olivia Kennyfeck left the room, her sister approached the fire-place, where a small charred portion of the note thrown down by her father was yet lying. She took it, and walking toward the window, examined it carefully.

And while we leave her thus occupied, let us, for the reader's information —albeit he may deem the matter trivial—give the contents as Cashel wrote them:

"Dear Mr. Kennyfeck,—Make my excuses to Mrs. Kennyfeck and the Demoiselles Cary and Olivia, if I deprive them of your society this morning at breakfast, for I shall want your counsel and assistance in the settlement of some difficult affairs. I have been shamefully backward in paying my respectful addresses to the ladies of your family; but to-day, if they will permit, I intend to afford myself that pleasure. It is as a friend, and not as my counsel learned in law, I ask your presence with me in my library at ten o'clock. Till then,

"Believe me yours,

"R. C."

Now, of this very common-place document, a few blackened, crumpled, frail fragments were all that remained; and these, even to the searching dark eyes of Miss Kennyfeck, revealed very little. Indeed, had they not been written in Cashel's hand, she would have thrown them away at once, as unworthy of further thought. This fact, and the word "Olivia," which she discovered after much scrutiny, however, excited all her zeal, and she laboured now like an antiquarian who believes he has gained the clue to some mysterious inscription. She gathered up the two or three filmy black bits of paper which yet lay within the fender, and placing them before her, studied them long and carefully. The word "settlement" was clear as print.

"'Olivia' and 'settlement' in the same paper," thought she; "what can this mean?"

"Come here, Mamma—Aunt Fanny—look at this for a moment," said she, eagerly; and the two ladies approached at her bidding.

"What is that word?" said she to Mrs. Kennyfeck; is it not 'Olivia?' Don't you see the end of the 'l' has been burned away, but the rest is quite plain?"

"So it is—upon my life!—and in Cashel's hand, too!" exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"And what is that?" asked Miss Kennyfeck, triumphantly, pointing to another word.

Aunt Fanny, with her spectacles on, bent down, and examined it long.

"'Battlement.' That is 'battlement' as clear as day," said she.

"What nonsense, Aunt—it is 'settlement.' Look at what you call a 'b'—it is an 's.'"

"Cary's quite right. The word is 'settlement,'" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a voice tremulous with joy.

"And there!—I hope you can read!" exclaimed Miss Kennyfeck, "even without your spectacles—'paying'—'addresses.'"

"Show it to *me*, Cary," said her mother, eagerly. "I declare I can read it perfectly. Is it possible?—can this be indeed true?"

"Of course it is, Mamma. Will you tell me by what other coincidence you could find Olivia's name coupled with the words 'settlement' and 'addresses' in the same note?"

"It is very suspicious, certainly," said Aunt Fanny.

"I think it very convincing, Aunt—not suspicious," said Miss Kennyfeck, proudly. "Here is something about 'friend,' and another word I can't make out."

"That's something about a 'saw,' my love," said Aunt Fanny.

"How absurd, Aunt; the word is 'law.' I have it. See—here is the name—it is the conclusion of the note, and ran, doubtless, thus: 'Your present friend, and future son-in-law,—R. C."

Mrs. Kennyfeck leaned forward, and kissed her daughter's cheek with a degree of fervour she very rarely gave way to; and then, lying back in her chair, pressed her handkerchief to her face, while she, doubtless, revelled in a little excursion of fancy, not the less brilliant because tempered with anxiety.

If the moment was one of maternal ecstasy for Mrs. Kennyfeck, it was no less one of triumphant joy to her daughter. It was *she* who revealed the secret meaning; her skill and ingenuity had given light to the dark mystery, and consistency to its incoherence. What domination could be too great for such services? It was then, like a legitimate sovereign assuming the reins of government, she said:

"I beg, Aunt Fanny, that you will not spoil the game this time, as most unquestionably you did before."

"Let us see that there is one to be spoiled, my dear," rejoined Aunt Fanny, snappishly.

"You are really too provoking, Fanny," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, removing her handkerchief from two very red eyelids. "You never are satisfied when you see us happy. Cary has shown you enough to convince any one——"

"Any one disposed to conviction, Mamma," broke in Miss Kennyfeck, haughtily. "Hush, here's Olivia."

"Mr. Meek is reading the *Post*, Ma," said the young lady, entering; "and he has got the other papers in his pocket, but he says there's really nothing of any interest in them."

"I think Livy should be told, Mamma," whispered Miss Kennyfeck to her mother.

"I quite agree with you, Cary," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "I never was a friend to any secrecy in families. Your father, indeed, I grieve to say, does

ot participate in my sentiments; but much may be excused in him, from the habits of his profession, and, I will also say, from the class in life he sprang from." Here Mrs. Kennyfeck, who had spoken like one delivering an oracle, stopped to drop a tear over the sad *mésalliance* which had condemned her to become the wife of an attorney. "Olivia, my dear, circumstances have disclosed the nature of the interview which Mr. Kennyfeck would not confide to us. It is one in which you are deeply concerned, my dear. Have you any suspicion to what I allude?"

Olivia assumed her very sweetest look of innocence, but made no reply.

"Mamma wants you to be candid enough to say, if there is anything in the way of particular attention you may have received lately, which should corroborate the impressions we entertain."

Miss Kennyfeck delivered these words so categorically, that her sister well knew how, in the event of refusal, a searching cross-examination was reserved for her.

Olivia looked down, and a very slight embarrassment might be detected in the quickened heaving of her chest.

"Tell us, my darling," said Aunt Fanny, "if—if any one has, in a manner so to say—you understand—eh?"

"Keep the blushes, Livy, for another time; they look beautiful with orange flowers in the hair," said her sister; "but be candid with us."

"If you mean attentions, Mamma——"

"We mean attentions, 'and something more,' as Lord Lyndhurst says," interposed Miss Kennyfeck, who felt that she was the proper person to conduct the inquiry.

"I cannot positively say, Mamma, that we are engaged, but I believe that if you and Pa made no obstacles—if, in fact, you are satisfied that his rank and fortune are sufficient for your expectations, as I own they are, for mine——"

"What humility!" exclaimed Miss Kennyfeck, holding up her hands.

"Hush, Cary—go on Livy," said her mother.

"I have no more to say, Mamma. Sir Harvey told me——"

"Sir Harvey!" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"Sir Harvey Upton!" echoed Miss Kennyfeck.

"The man with the hair all over his face!" exclaimed Aunt Fanny, whose western habits had not accustomed her to moustaches.

Olivia stared from one to the other in mingled fear and astonishment. She suddenly saw that she had been betrayed into a confession to which they did not possess the slightest clue; she also perceived that the tidings, for which she anticipated a most joyous welcome, were received with coldness and almost disdain.

"He is a Baronet, Mamma, with very great expectations," said she proudly; for really, it was a large "bird" to bag, in the beginning of the season, too!

"Very possibly," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, looking to her elder daughter with that silent eloquence which the Court occasionally bestows upon the Crown Counsel, meaning to say: "Have you anything to reply to that?"

"Mamma is aware that Sir Harvey is a Baronet, and a Captain of Hussars, and Jonas Upton of Summerton is his uncle, who may, or may not, leave him his large estates—a circumstance, most probably, mainly dependent on the alliance he may form in marriage."

"Yes, indeed! my dear," broke in Aunt Fanny; "and when the old man finds out that 'tis only an Attorney's daughter——"

"Fanny, do you mean to drive me distracted!" screamed Mrs. Kennyfeck; "are my children to be taught to be ashamed of their father?"

"'Tis a lesson they might know by heart, this time of day, my dear," said the inexorable Fanny, who put up her spectacles, and smoothed down her apron—unmistakable signs that she was preparing for battle.

"You needn't 'beat to quarters,' Aunt, as Captain Luttredge says; there is no one going to fire into you," said Miss Kennyfeck. "The question at present is, how is Olivia to free herself from an unhappy connexion——"

"An unhappy connexion!" exclaimed Livy, in amazement.

"Listen to your sister, and don't interrupt her," said Mrs. Kennyfeck.

"I spoke advisedly, Livy," resumed the elder, "when I called your connexion with Sir Harvey Upton, unhappy. We have just learned that far higher views are opening to you—that no less a person than Mr. Cashel——"

"Impossible, Mamma! he never notices me in the least. Our acquaintance is scarcely more than a cold act of recognition when we meet."

"Though love is hot sometimes, soon it grows cold," muttered Aunt Fanny, who believed she was quoting to the letter.

"There never was love in the case at all, Aunt," said Olivia.

"Attend to *me*, Livy," said her sister, who seemed impatient at this digression. "It is sufficient—it ought at least to be sufficient—for you, that *we* know Mr. Roland Cashel's intentions. It is for *you* to establish a coolness with Sir Harvey. There is no difficulty in the task. I could not presume to instruct *you* in any matter of this kind, nor will I."

"Take a friend's advice, Livy dear, and don't throw out dirty water till you're sure of clean."

"What, Aunt?" asked Olivia, who really was puzzled by the figurative eloquence of her relative.

"Psha!" said Miss Kennyfeck, equally angry at the counsel and the vulgarity of the expression it was couched in. "Livy, attend to *me*," said she again. "Mr. Cashel has sent for Papa this morning to make a formal—— Hush! here is Pa himself." And Mr. Kennyfeck's heavy tread was heard approaching the door.

Mr. Kennyfeck's sudden entrance not only closed the discussion, but left the debaters in the difficulty of having no concerted line of conduct respecting the new arrival; and although Mrs. Kennyfeck's eyebrows were worked with a telegraphic activity, and Miss Kennyfeck's pantomimic replies as promptly returned, it was clear to see that neither comprehended the other. Kanitz lays it down as an axiom that "when two wings of an army are in presence of an enemy, and without means of rapid and certain communication, it is always better to act on the defensive than to attack, without some evident weak point of the adversary encourages a forward movement." It is more than probable that neither Mrs. Kennyfeck nor her fair daughter had studied the authority in question, yet, with a tact quite instinctive, they proceeded to act upon it.

"You are back early, Mr. Kennyfeck," said his wife, with a tone of half indifference.

Mr. Kennyfeck looked at his watch, and said it wanted twenty minutes to twelve.

"Has Mr. Linton returned, Pa?" asked Miss Kennyfeck.

"I believe not. I have not heard that he has."

"It would be little loss if he never did!" said Aunt Fanny, as she bit the end of an obstinate thread that would not enter the eye of her needle.

"Oh, Aunt Fanny!" exclaimed Olivia, in a deprecating tone.

"'Pon my word, my dear, them's my sentiments—whatever yours is."

"Mr. Cashel certainly thinks differently," said Mrs. Kennyfeck, glad to introduce the name uppermost in all their thoughts.

"I think of late there has been something like a coldness between them—you see them very rarely together. Did Mr. Cashel mention his name to you this morning, Mr. Kennyfeck?" said his wife; and by this sudden question revealing that they knew, at least, where he had been.

"Mere passingly, incidentally," said Mr. Kennyfeck, evidently amazed that his small mystery had been penetrated; then, after a slight pause, he added, very probably with a sly malice to pique curiosity, "Mr. Cashel is desirous of Mr. Linton's counsel on a step he meditates taking."

"Indeed, Sir; and has he much confidence in Mr. Linton's judgment?"

"In this instance, it is likely he will follow the dictates of his own, Mrs. Kennyfeck," said the Attorney, solemnly.

This fencing was too much for Mrs. Kennyfeck, in whom the Job-like

element was always at zero. It was an insult, too, to her understanding, that Mr. Kennyfeck should skirmish in this fashion with *her;* and so, drawing herself proudly up, she said:

"Mr. Kennyfeck, I would wish to ask you, if you have, even upon one single occasion, discovered that *my* knowledge of the world, *my* tact, or *my* intelligence, were inferior to your own?"

"Never, Madam; I'm sure I never disputed the——"

"No, Sir, you never dared to contest the fact, though you may have endeavoured to escape from its application. I believe, Sir, the only instance of deficient judgment I can be accused of, *you*, at least, ought not to reproach me with. 'My family'"—this was a word Mrs. Kennyfeck used to enunciate with an emphasis that always impressed her husband very little provocation might possibly have made her say, "Our house"—"my family, indeed, may refuse to forgive me"—she stopped, wiped her eyes, and then, with what seemed an heroic victory over her feelings, went on—"but the welfare of my children, Sir, may well be conceived dear to one, who would not league to them the unhappy descent she has herself suffered."

Mrs. Kennyfeck paused again. It appeared as though, do what she would, there was no escaping from the theme of her *mésalliance* when once she had touched it. It was very birdlime in its adhesiveness.

"When, therefore, Mr. Kennyfeck, the occasion presents itself of resuming, through my children—for, alas! it is lost to me in my own person—the station I have forfeited, I do think that I should at least be consulted, that my advice should be asked, and my guidance required. Don't you think so too, Sir?"

Now, of all men living, never was there one more inept to read riddles than poor Mr. Kennyfeck, and while he averred that he perfectly concurred in his wife's opinion, he had not the faintest glimmering of a notion what that opinion implied.

"Don't you think, Sir, also, it would be better to use a little candour with your family?"

"Yes, Pa, we know all about it," said Miss Kennyfeck, nodding significantly.

"Ay, indeed, we had it in black and white—that is, if we can call a bit of burnt——"

"Aunt Fanny, what are you about?" cried Miss Kennyfeck, in a voice of real terror, for she was shocked at the meanness she did not scruple to stoop to.

"Yes, Mr. Kennyfeck," reiterated his wife, "we know all! If, however you still persist in maintaining that mysterious aspect you have assumed with your family, I must say, Sir it is perfectly absurd."

"It is unnecessary, too, Papa," cried Miss Kennyfeck.

"And it's unfair to that young creature," chimed in Aunt Fanny, with a gesture towards Olivia, who sat, *en tableau* for injured innocence, next a window.

Possibly, if any could have read Mr. Kennyfeck's sentiments at that instant, they would have recognised the sufferings of a true martyr. To his own heart he muttered,

"This is very hard; it is being called upon to reply to a case without a copy of the affidavits."

At length, with a courage that he did not believe he was capable of, he said:

"I am confused, Mrs. Kennyfeck; I am overwhelmed; I may submit a plea of surprise—that is, I would move the Court, I mean—in fact, I must beg you will permit me to adjourn this case."

And with these words, and in an agitation very unusual with him, he hastened from the room. Scarcely had the door closed after him, than he reopened it, and putting in his head, said,

"I should have told you, Mrs. Kennyfeck, that Mr. Cashel intends to pay a visit here to-day."

And so saying, he shut the door and departed.

"At last, Sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Kennyfeck, in a voice of exultation, "you have been obliged to confess so much at least; but, rely on it, girls, your father is acting under Cashel's dictation, or he never would dare to tamper in this manner with *me*."

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## CHAPTER XLV.

### A STARTLING INTRUSION.

> Say what you will, good friend, I do persist,
> I had him "covered," when you shook my wrist.
>
> THE DUEL.

In a handsome drawing-room, where the light was judiciously tempered by the slight folds of rose-coloured curtains, while the air breathed the faint delicious perfume of some hot-house flowers, sat Olivia Kennyfeck alone. She was most simply, but becomingly dressed, and in her hair, worn in smooth bands on either cheek, a little sprig of Greek myrtle, with its bright red berries, was interwoven, which served to show to even greater advantage the delicate fairness of a skin tinged with the very faintest blush. There

was a soft pensive character in her beauty, which seemed to harmonise perfectly with the silent room and its scattered objects of art. The very exclusion of all view appeared to add to the effect; as though suggesting how much of in-door happiness was contained within those four walls; neither asking for, nor wanting, the "wide cold world" without. She was reading —at least she held a book in her hand—a gorgeously bound little volume it was—nor did the dark ribbon of velvet fringed with gold that marked her place fail to contrast well with the snowy whiteness of the wrist it fell upon.

Her attitude, as she lay, rather than sat, in a deep arm-chair, was faultless in its grace; and, even to the tiny foot which rested on a little Blenheim spaniel, as he lay sleeping on the hearth-rug, had a certain air of homelike ease that made the scene a picture, and to a suggestive mind might have given it a story. And yet, for all the sleepy softness of those half-drooped lids, for all that voluptuous ease of every lineament and limb, the heart within was watchful and waking. Not a sound upon the stairs, not a voice, nor a footstep, that did not make its pulses beat faster and fuller.

Two o'clock struck, and the great bell rang out which called the guests to luncheon, a meal at which Cashel never appeared; and now Olivia listened to the sounds of merry laughter that floated along the corridors, and faded away in the distance, as group after group passed down stairs, and at last, all was silent again. Where was he? Why did he not come? she asked herself again and again. Her mamma and sister had purposely stayed away from luncheon to receive him; for so it was arranged, that she herself should first see Cashel alone, and afterwards be joined by the others—and yet he came not!

The half-hour chimed, and Olivia looked up at the French clock upon the mantelpiece with amazement. Surely there had been more than thirty minutes since she heard it last; and the little Cupid on the top, who, with full-stretched bow and fixed eye, seemed bent on mischief—silly fool! like herself, there was no mark to shoot at! She sighed; it was not a deep sigh, nor a sad one; nor was it the wearisome expression of listlessness; nor was it the tribute paid to some half-called-up memory. It was none of these; though perhaps each entered into it as an ingredient. But what right have we to analyse its meaning, or ask how much of hope or fear it contained?—what portion of regret for one she was about to desert?—what shame for the faithlessness? Ay, what shame!

Coquetry is no virtue; but most certainly it is not the wholesale corrupter some moralists would make it. Miss Olivia Kennyfeck had been taught it from her earliest years,—from those pleasant days, when, dressed like some fairy queen, she descended from the nursery to stand beside Pa's

chair on company days, at dessert, and be stared at, and kissed, and "dear-loved" by some scores of people, whose enthusiasm for childish beauty had all the warmth that springs from turtle and truffles, iced punch and Lafitte. She had been taught it by the French governess, who told her to be "aimable." The very dancing-master cried out, "Grace—more grace, if you please, Miss Olivia," at every step of her minuet; and the riding-master's eternal exhortation was, "Sit as if the whole world was watching you, Miss."

These teachings go further and deeper into the heart than we suspect. "The wish to please"—pure and amiable as the feeling can be—lies on the frontier of a dangerous land—the "wish to conquer." That passion once engendered in the heart, no room remains for any other.

To return to Miss Olivia Kennyfeck—for most ungallantly we are forgetting she is alone all this while. Her education had but one end and object—to obtain a good position by marriage. The precept had been instilled into her mind in a thousand different ways, and not only self-interest, but pride, emulation, and vanity had been enlisted in its support. So constantly was the theme presented to her, such day-by-day discussion of the prizes and blanks drawn by others in the wheel connubial, that she really felt little or no interest in any other topic.

And yet, with all that misdirection of mind, that perverse insistance on wrong, there was still in her heart a void, a want, that neither vanity nor selfishness could fill. It might be, perhaps, to be found out by one who should make it the storehouse of high and generous impulses, of ennobling duties and tender affections; or, just as likely, lie like some fruitful but unknown tract—barren, waste, and profitless!

Three o'clock came! And now the house resounded with the buzz of voices and the hurried movement of feet. Carriages and horses, too, assembled before the door, and all the pleasant bustle of those bent on pleasure filled the air. Olivia arose, and, screened by the curtain, watched the scene beneath. For the first time she perceived that Lady Kilgoff was in a riding-dress. She stood in the midst of a group before the door, amid which Olivia's eyes peered with restless activity.

No, Cashel was not there! She almost said the comforting words aloud, but at the same instant a cry of "Here he is—here he comes!" broke from those beneath, and every head was turned towards the road to the stables, along which Cashel was seen cantering a snow-white Arab of great beauty. As he came nearer it could be seen that he was seated on a side-saddle, while he managed the well-trained creature with the most graceful address.

"Are you quite certain I may venture, Mr. Cashel?" said Lady Kilgoff, as he pulled up in front of her; "remember, that I am neither so fearless

nor so skilful as our fair Queen beside me, who, I must own, is far more worthy of 'Hassan Bey' than I am."

"I'll pledge my life on his good conduct," said Roland, springing from his back; "I've ridden him for an hour, and he is gentleness itself."

"He's over-trained for my fancy," said Miss Meek. "He's like one of the creatures you see in Franconi's, walking up a ladder to catch a handkerchief."

Lady Janet whispered something in her ear, at which she started and smiled, but evidently in ignorance of its meaning.

"What is that very wicked thing that Lady Janet has just told you?" said Lady Kilgoff, as she advanced to mount her horse.

"It was à propos of the handkerchief. She said, 'Probably you were going to throw yours at Mr. Cashel'—I'm sure I don't know why."

Fortunately none but Lady Kilgoff and Cashel heard this speech, but both blushed deeply.

While this was enacting below, Olivia, who marked every gesture and every look eagerly, could not hear what passed. She could only see the respectful attention bestowed by Cashel on every wish of his fair guest how, having seated her, he draped in graceful folds the long velvet habit, in which, and with a white hat and drooping feather, she resembled one of the court of Louis Quinze.

At last she turned her horse's head, and rode him slowly along before the house, evidently timid and afraid of the high-mettled animal. Cashel, however, walked at his head, and so they stood, while he arranged the curb-chain, exactly beneath the window where Olivia was standing.

She opened the sash noiselessly, and, bending down, listened.

"I assure you," said Lady Kilgoff, "I'll not continue my ride if you don't come. I have no confidence in these fine gentlemen cavaliers; and as for Miss Meek, she'd risk her life to see me run away with."

"I pledge myself to follow in ten minutes—nay, in five, if possible. I told Mr. Kennyfeck I should make my obeisances to the ladies to-day."

"Would to-morrow not serve?" said she, smiling.

"I believe it might—but, a promise! Besides, I have been sadly deficient in attentions there."

"Sir Harvey and his brother Hussar have made the *amende* for your short-comings; but go, make haste and overtake us. I see 'my Lord' trying to understand Lady Janet, and I must not delay longer."

"Ride slowly," cried Roland, "and don't get run away with till I'm of the party."

She nodded archly in reply to this speech, and joining the group, whe

were all awaiting her, rode off, while Cashel entered the house, and soon was heard ascending the stairs at a hurried pace.

Olivia could only close the window and resume her place, when a tap was given at the door, and the same instant Cashel entered the room. He stopped suddenly, and looked around, for at first he did not perceive Olivia, who, deep in her book, affected not to hear the noise of his approach.

The rich coronet of brown hair, on which an evening sun was throwing one brilliant gleam, caught his eye, and he advanced near enough to see and be struck by that graceful attitude of which we gave our reader a glimpse at the opening of this chapter.

She was reading some old English ballad; and, as she closed the volume, murmured, half aloud, the lines of the concluding verse:

> "And ye varlete, bounde upon a carte,
> Was draggede to ye gallows high,
> While ye knighte that stole ye ladye's hearte
> (And was not his ye gravere parte?)
> Rode oute to see him die."

"A sad moral, indeed," said Cashel, in a low, soft voice.

"Oh dear! oh, Mr. Cashel!" cried she, starting, and letting fall the book, "how you have terrified me."

"Pray forgive me," said he, drawing his chair near, "but when I entered the room I saw no one. I had come thus far ere I discovered that I was so fortunate."

"Shall I ring for Mamma and Cary? they are dressing, I know, but will be quite annoyed if you go before they come down."

"You must not inconvenience them on my account," said Roland, eagerly "I'm certain," added he, smiling, "you are not afraid to receive me alone."

She hung down her head, and partly averting it, murmured a scarcely audible "No."

Cashel, who had evidently never calculated on his careless remark being taken thus seriously, looked silly and uncomfortable for a few seconds. There is a terrible perversity sometimes in our natures; we are disposed to laugh occasionally at times when nothing could be more ill-timed or unsuitable; and so, at moments when we would give anything in the world for some common-place theme to hang phrases on, we cannot, for the life of us, originate one.

"You've not ridden out, I think, since we came?" said Roland, at last, but with an air of sudden despair at his own stupidity.

"No. We have driven out once or twice; but—but——"

"Pray finish," said he, with a persuasive look as he spoke.

"I was going to say that your horses are so spirited, that I was really afraid to trust myself, and the more so as Miss Meek is so wild and so reckless."

"Never think of riding with *her*. Let me be your *chaperon*—shall we say to morrow? I've got the gentlest creature that was ever mounted."

"Oh, I know her; that sweet white Arab I saw the groom exercising yesterday?"

"No; not she," said Roland, blushing and confused, "a spotted barb, fully as handsome—some say handsomer. Will you do me the favour to ride her to-morrow, and, if she be fortunate enough to please you, to accept her?"

Olivia hung down her head full a second, and a deep scarlet covered her cheek, and rose even to her temples, and it was with a voice broken and interrupted she said, "Oh, I cannot—I must not." Then, turning on him a look, where the tearful eyes, swimming in a softened lustre, conveyed a whole story of deep suffering, she said rapidly: "You are too kind and too good ever to give pain; you are too generous to believe others capable of it; but were I to accept your beautiful gift—were I even to ride out with you *alone*—there is nothing that would not be said of me."

It was Cashel's turn for a slight blush now; and, to do him justice, he felt the sensation a most disagreeable one. It had not indeed occurred to him to make the proposal as the young lady took it, but he was far too long schooled in gallantry to undeceive her, and so he said, "I really cannot see this in the light you do. It is a very natural wish on my part, that I should show my guests whatever my poor grounds afford of the picturesque; and remember, we are not friends of yesterday." This he said in his very kindest tone.

"I *do* remember it," said she, with a slow but most meaning sigh.

"That memory is, I trust, not so associated with sorrow," added he, leaning down, and speaking in a deep, earnest voice, "that you recal it with a sigh?"

"Oh no; but I was thinking—I must not say of what I was thinking."

"Nay, but you must," said he, gently, and drawing his chair closer.

"I dare not—I cannot—besides, you"—and there was on the pronoun the very softest of all-dwelling intonation—"*you* might be angry—might never forgive me."

"Now I must insist on your telling me," said Roland, passionately, "if but to show how unfairly you judge me."

"Well," said she, drawing a long breath—"but shall I trust you?"

There was a most winning archness in the way she said this, that thrilled through Cashel as he listened. "No, I will not," added she, suddenly, and as if carried away by a passionate impulse; "you are too——"

"Too what?" cried he, impatiently.

"Too fickle," said she; and then, as if terrified at her own boldness, she added, in a tremulous voice, "Oh, do forgive me."

"There is really nothing to forgive," said Roland, "unless you persist in keeping from me an avowal that I almost fancy I have a right to ask for. And now, of what were you thinking?"

"I'll tell you," said she, in a low, earnest accent, "though it may lose me your esteem. I was thinking"—her voice here fell so low, that Cashel, to hear her words, was obliged to draw his chair closer, and bend down his head till it actually brushed against the leaves she wore in her hair—"I was thinking that, when we knew you first, before you had made acquaintance with others—when you sat and read to us—when we walked and rode together—when, in short, the day was one bright dream of pleasure to us, who had never known a brother——"

Pardon us, dear reader, if, at so critical a moment, we occupy the pause which here ensued—and there was a pause—by referring to our Aunt Fanny, only premising that we do so advisedly. It was one of that excellent lady's firmest convictions that every one in the world required some discreet friend, who should, at eventful passages in life, be ready to aid, by presence of mind, a wavering resolve, or confirm a half-formed determination. Now, she had waited for two mortal hours on that day for Cashel's coming, in a state of impatience little short of fever. She opened and shut her window, looked up one avenue and down another; she had watched on the landing, and stood sentinel on the stairs; she had seen Mrs. Kennyfeck and her elder daughter pass out into the garden, weary of long waiting; when, at last, she heard Roland's hasty step as he traversed the hall, and, hurrying up-stairs, enter the drawing-room.

Drawn by an attraction there is no explaining, she left her room, and took up her position in a small boudoir which adjoined the drawing-room. Here she sat, persuading herself she was at her work; but, in reality, in a state of suspense not very inferior to some prisoner while a jury is deliberating on his fate.

The conversation, at first conducted in an ordinary tone, had gradually subsided, till it dropped into the low, undistinguishable manner we have mentioned.

Aunt Fanny's inventive mind had suggested every step of the interview. She kept muttering to herself: "He is explaining himself—she is incredulous—and he tries to reassure her—she believes that his heart was given

to another—he vows and swears it was always hers—she cannot credit the happiness—she is too unworthy."

It was just as our Aunt had got thus far in her running commentary that both voices ceased, and a stillness, unbroken by a murmur, succeeded. "What could it mean?" was the sudden question that flashed across her mind; and Napoleon's own dread anxiety, as he gazed on the wood, and hesitated whether the dark masses emerging from the shade were his own legions or the Prussians, was not much more intense than hers. At last—we are sorry to record it—but, alas! Aunt Fanny was only mortal, and an old maid to boot—she approached the door and peeped through the keyhole. The sight which met her eyes needed no second glance; she saw both heads bent down together, the dark waving hair of Cashel close to the nut-brown silky braids of Olivia. Neither spoke. "It was then concluded."

This was the moment in which mutual avowals, meeting like two rivers, form one broad and sweeping flood. It was the moment, too, in which, according to her theory, a friend was all essential. According to her phrase, the "nail should be clinched."

Now, Aunt Fanny had been cruelly handled by the family for all the blunders she had committed. Her skill had been impugned; her shrewdness sneered at; her prognostications derided. Here was an opportunity to refute all at once; and, in the language of the conqueror, "to cover herself with glory."

Gently opening the door she entered the room, and stealing tiptoe over, till she stood behind their chairs, she placed, with all the solemnity of an archbishop, a hand on either head, and, in a voice of touching fervour, said:

"Bless ye both, my darlings; may ye be as happy as——"

As what? The history is unable to record; for a shrill cry from her niece, and an exclamation nearly as loud, and we fear far less polite, from Roland, cut short the speech.

Shriek followed shriek from Olivia, who, partly from the shock, and still more from shame, was thrown into an attack of hysterics.

"What the——" he was very nigh saying something else—"what have you done, Madam?" said Roland, in a state of mingled anger and terror.

"It's only your Aunt Fanny. It's me, my pet. Livy, darling, don't be frightened; and here, too, is Mr. Cashel."

In this, however, the good lady was mistaken; for Roland had hastened up-stairs to Mrs. Kennyfeck's room, which finding locked, he flew down to the great drawing-room, thence to the library, and was making for the garden, when he saw that lady and her daughter crossing the hall.

"I'm afraid, Madam," said he, with all the composure he could summon,

"Miss Olivia Kennyfeck is not well; nothing serious, I trust; but a sudden fright—a shock—Miss O'Hara somewhat imprudently——"

"Oh, Fanny again!" screamed Mrs. Kennyfeck; and without waiting for more, rushed up-stairs, followed by her daughter, while Roland, in a state of mind we dare not dwell upon, hastened from the house, and mounting his horse, galloped off into the wood.

There were times when Cashel would have laughed, and laughed heartily, at the absurdity of this adventure. He would have even treasured up the "tableau" as a thing for future ridicule among his friends; but his better feelings, born of a more manly pride, rejected this now; he was sorry, deeply, sincerely sorry, that one, with so much to fascinate and charm about her, could lend herself to a mere game like this! "Where are these deceptions to end?" said he, in passionate warmth. "Have candour, good faith, and honesty fled the world? or, are they only to be found among those whose vices make the foil to such humble virtues?"

Nor were these his only painful reflections. He was obliged to see himself—the thing, of all others, he despised—"a Dupe." The mark for every mean artifice and every ignoble scheme. The gambler—the flirt—the adventurer in every walk—regarded him as a prey. Wealth had done this for him—and it had done no more! None cared for him as a friend or companion. Even as a lover, his addresses were heralded by his gold, not enhanced by qualities of his own. What humiliation!

Mary Leicester alone seemed unimpressed by his great fortune, and regardless of his wealth. She alone had never evinced towards him any show of preference above others less endowed by Fate. Nay, he fancied he could trace something of reserve in her manner whenever he stepped by chance out of his character of careless, buoyant youth, and dwelt upon the plans that mere money accomplishes. In these she showed no interest, and took no pleasure; while, to the adventures of his former life, she listened with eager attention. It was easy to see she thought more of the *Caballero* than the *Millionnaire*.

What a happiness had it been to have befriended her grandfather and herself; how different had been his reflections at this hour; what lessons in the true wisdom of life might he not have learned from one who had seen the world, not as the play-table for the rolling dice of fortune, but as the battle-ground where good and evil strive for victory where a higher philosophy is taught than the lifeless, soulless dictates of mere fashionable existence!

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### SCANDAL, AND GENERAL ILL-HUMOUR.

**But where are they alle, I do not see,**
**One half of our goodlie companie?**
HONE.

THAT day was destined to be one of contrarieties to the household of Tubbermore. Of the Kennyfeck family, none appeared at dinner. Lady Kilgoff, angry at Roland's breach of engagement—for, although he rode at top-speed in every direction, he never overtook her—also kept her room. The carriage sent for Miss Leicester had returned without her, a somewhat formal note of apology stating that Mr. Corrigan was indisposed, and his granddaughter unwilling to leave him; while Linton, usually a main feature in all the social success of a dinner, was still absent.

Of the assembled guests, too, few were in their wonted spirits. Sir Andrew and Lady Janet had quarrelled in the morning about the mode of preparing dandelion tea, and kept up the dispute all the day. Upton was sulky, dark, and reserved. Meek more than usually lachrymose. Frobisher's best mare had been staked in taking a leap, and Miss Meek had never discovered it till half an hour after, so that the lameness was greatly aggravated. Mrs. White had had a "tiff" with the author, for his not believing the Irish to be of Phœnician origin, and wouldn't speak to him at dinner; so that Cashel himself, constrained, absent, and ill at ease, found his company anything rather than a relief to his own distracted thoughts.

Among his other guests he found the same reserve and coldness of manner, so that no sooner had they assembled in the drawing-room, after dinner, than he left the house and set off to inquire for Mr. Corrigan at the cottage.

"We had nine vacant places to-day at table," said Lady Janet, as soon as she had arranged her special table next the fire, with a shade in front and a screen behind her, and was quite satisfied that, in regard to cushions and footstools, she had monopolised the most comfortable in the room.

"I thought—aw—that we—aw—were somewhat slow," said Captain Jennings, with his habitually tiresome, pompous intonation.

"What's the matter with Upton?" said a junior officer of his regiment, in a whisper; "he looks so confoundedly put out."

"I'm sure I don't know," yawned out Lord Charles; "he has a very safe book on the Oaks."

"He's backing Dido at very long odds," interposed Miss Meek, "and she's weak before, they say."

"Not staked, I hope," said Frobisher, looking maliciously at her.

"I don't care what you say, Charley," rejoined she; "I defy any one to know whether a horse goes tender, while galloping in deep ground. You are always unjust." And she moved away in anger.

"She *is* so careless," said Frobisher, listlessly.

"Tell me about these Kennyfecks. What is it all about?" said Mrs. White, bustling up, as if she was resolved on a long confidence.

"They hedged against themselves, I hear," said Frobisher.

"Indeed! poor things; and are they much hurt?"

"Not seriously, I fancy," drawled he. "Lady Janet knows it all."

Mrs. White did not neglect the suggestion, but at once repaired to that part of the room where Lady Janet was sitting, surrounded by a select circle, eagerly discussing the very question she had asked to be informed upon.

"I had it from Verthinia," said Mrs. Malone, with her peculiar, thick enunciation, "Lady Kilgoff's maid. She said that not a day passes without some such scene between the mother and daughters. Mrs. Kennyfeck had, it seems, forbithen Cashel to call there in her abthence."

"I must most respectfully interrupt you, Madam," said a large old lady, with blonde false hair, and a great deal of rouge, "but the affair was quite different. Miss Olivia, that is the second girl, was detected by her aunt, Miss O'Hara, packing up for an elopement."

"Fudge," said Lady Janet; "she'd have helped her, if that were the case! I believe the true version of the matter is yet to come out. My woman, Stubbs, saw the apothecary coming down stairs, after bleeding Livy, and called him into her room; not, indeed, to speak of this matter"—here Lady Janet caused her voice to be heard by Sir Andrew, who sat, in moody sulk, right opposite—"it was to ask, if there should not be two pods of capsicum in every pint of dandelion tea."

"There may be twa horns o' the de'il in it," ejaculated Sir Andrew, "but I'll na pit it to my mouth agen. I hae a throat like the fiery furnace that roasted the three chaps in the Bible."

"It suits your tongue all the better," muttered Lady Janet, and turned round to the others. "Stubbs, as I was saying, called the man in, and after some conversation about the dandelion, asked, in a cursory way, you know, 'How the lady was, up-stairs?' He shook his head, and said nothing.

"'It will not be tedious, I hope?' said Stubbs-

"'These are most uncertain cases,' said he; 'sometimes they last a day, sometimes eight or nine.'

"'I think you're very mysterious, doctor,' said Stubbs.

"He muttered something about honour, and, seizing his hat, went off, as Stubbs says, 'as if he was shot!'"

"Honour!" cried one of the hearers.

"Honour!" ejaculated another, with an expression of pure horror.

"Didn't he say, Madam," said the blonde old lady, "that it wasn't his branch of the profession?"

"Oh! oh!" broke in the company together, while the younger ladies held up their fans and giggled behind them.

"I'm thorry for the poor mother!" sighed Mrs. Malone, who had seven daughters, each uglier than the other.

"I pity the elder girl," said Lady Janet; "she had a far better tone about her than the rest."

"And that dear, kind, old creature, the aunt. It is said that but for her care this would have happened long ago," said Mrs. Malone.

"She was, to my thinking, the best of them," echoed the blonde lady; "so discreet, so quiet, and so unobtrusive."

"What could come of their pretension?" said a colonel's widow, with a very large nose and a very small pension; "they attempted a style of living quite unsuited to them! The house always full of young men, too."

"You wouldn't have had them invite old ones, Madam," said Lady Janet, with the air of rebuke the wife of a commander-in-chief can assume to the colonel's relict.

"It's a very sad affair, indeed," summed up Mrs. White, who, if she hadn't quarrelled with Mr. Howle, would have given him the whole narrative for the "Satanist."

"What a house to be sure! There's Lady Kilgoff on one side——"

"What of her, my Lady?" said the blonde.

"You didn't hear of Lord Kilgoff overtaking her to-day in the wood with Sir Harvey Upton?—hush! or he'll hear us. The poor old man—you know his state of mind—snatched the whip from the coachman, and struck Sir Harvey across the face. They say there's a great welt over the cheek!"

Mrs. White immediately arose, and, under pretence of looking for a book, made a circuit of the room in that part where Sir Harvey Upton was lounging, with his head on his hand.

"Quite true," said she, returning to the party. "It is so painful, he can't keep his hand from the spot."

"Has any one discovered who the strange-looking man was that was received by Mr. Cashel this morning in his own study?" asked the blonde. "My maid said he was for all the world like a sheriff's officer. It seems, too, he was very violent in his language; and but for Mr. Kennyfeck, he would not have left the house."

"Too true, I fear, Ma'am," said Mrs. Malone; "my husband, the Thief" —this was Mrs. Malone's mode of abbreviating and pronouncing the words Chief Justice—"told me it was impothible for Mr. Cashel to continue his extravaganth much longer."

"It's shameful—it's disgraceful," said Lady Janet; "the kitchen is a scene of waste and recklessness, such as no fortune could stand."

"Indeed, so the 'Thief' said," resumed Mrs. Malone; "he said that robbery went on, on every thide, and that Mr. Phillith, I think his name is, was the worst of all."

"Your husband was quite correct, Ma'am," said Lady Janet; "no one should know it better." And then she whispered in her neighbour's ear, "If the adage be true, 'Set a Thief to catch a Thief.'"

The party entrusted with this could not restrain her laughter, and for a space, a species of distrust seemed to pervade the circle.

We are certain that no apology will be required, if we ask of our reader to quit this amiable society—although seated at a comfortable fire, in the very easiest of chairs, with the softest carpet beneath his feet—and accompany Roland Cashel, who now, with hasty step, trod the little path that led to Tubber-beg Cottage.

However inhospitable the confession, we are bound to acknowledge Cashel was growing marvellously weary of his character as a host. The hundred little contrarieties which daily arose, and which he knew not how to smooth down or conciliate, made him appear, in his own estimation at least, deficient in worldly tact, and left him open to the belief that others would judge him even less mercifully. The unbridled freedom of his household, besides, stimulated all the selfishness of those who, in a better arranged establishment, had kept "watch and ward" over their egotism; and thus, instead of presenting the features of a society where the elements of agreeability were not deficient, they resembled rather the company in a packet-ship, each bent upon securing his own comfort, and only intent how to make his neighbour subsidiary to himself.

Prosperity, too, was teaching him one of its least gracious lessons—"Distrust." The mean and selfish natures by which he was surrounded were gradually unfolding themselves to his view, and he was ever on the verge of that dangerous frontier where scepticism holds sway. One con

clusion—and it was not the least wise—he formed was, that he was ill suited to such companionship, and that he had been happier, far happier, on some humble fortune, than as the rich proprietor of a great estate.

It was, while thus ruminating, Cashel found himself at the little space which intervened between one front of the cottage and the lake, and was struck by the rapid movement of lights that glanced from window to window, appearing and disappearing at every instant.

The dread that the old man was taken seriously ill at once came over him, and he hastened forward in eager anxiety to learn the tidings. Then, suddenly checking himself, he felt reluctant, almost stranger that he was, to obtrude at such a moment. Fearing to advance, and unwilling to retire, he stood uncertain and hesitating.

As he remained thus, the door of the drawing-room that opened upon the lawn was flung wide, and Tiernay passed hastily out, saying in a loud and excited voice, "I will have my own way. I'll see Cashel at once." And with these words he issued forth in haste. Scarcely, however, had he gone a dozen paces, than he stopped short, and, clasping his hands firmly together, muttered aloud, "To what end should I seek him? What claim can I pretend—by what right appeal to him?"

"Every claim and every right," cried Roland, advancing towards him, "if I can only be of any service to you."

"What! actually here at this moment!" exclaimed Tiernay. "Come this way with me, Sir; we must not go into the house just yet." And so saying, he passed his arm within Roland's, and led him onward towards the lake.

"Is he ill?" said Cashel—"is Mr. Corrigan taken ill?" But although the question was asked eagerly, Tiernay was too deeply sunk in his own thoughts to hear it; while he continued to mutter hurriedly to himself.

"What *is* the matter?" said Roland at last, losing patience at a preoccupation that could not be broken in upon. "Is Mr. Corrigan ill?"

"He is ruined!" said Tiernay, dropping Cashel's arm, and letting fall his own as he spoke, with a gesture of despair.

"What do you mean?—How?"

"Ruined! utterly ruined!" re-echoed Tiernay; and there was that in his accent and the emotion of his manner that forbade any further questioning.

"It is not at a moment like this," said the Doctor, "that I can tell you a long tale, where treachery and falsehood on one side, and generosity and manliness on the other, played the game as ever it has been, and ever will be played, between such antagonists;—enough, if I say my poor friend be-

came responsible for the debts of a man who, but for his aid, would have had a felon's fate. This fellow, who possesses one terrible means of vengeance, threatens now to use it, if a demand be not complied with, which Corrigan may leave himself a beggar and yet not satisfy. The threat has been held over him for years, and for years he has struggled on, parting, one by one, with every little requirement of his station, and submitting with noble resignation to any and everything to stave off the evil day; but it has come at last."

"And what is the sum demanded?" said Cashel, hastily.

"I cannot tell. There are various bills; some have been renewed again and again, others are yet current. It is a tangled web, and, in our hopelessness, we never sought to unravel it!"

"But the danger is imminent?"

"So imminent, that my friend will be arrested to-morrow if bail be not forthcoming. I have not told him this; I dare not tell him so; but I have made up a story to induce him to leave this to-night."

"Where for?" cried Roland, anxiously.

"God knows! I lose memory as well as judgment in moments like this. I believe I advised Limerick, and thence by ship to some port in England, from which they could reach the Continent."

"But all this will be unnecessary if I offer myself as security," said Roland.

"For a sum of which you know nothing!" muttered Tiernay, sorrowfully.

"No matter; it cannot be, in all likelihood, more than I can meet."

"And for one who can never repay!" echoed the Doctor, still more sadly.

"Who can tell that?" said Cashel; "there's many a coinage costlier than ever the Mint fashioned; he may requite me thus."

The Doctor started. "You mean—no!—no!" cried he, interrupting himself, "that were too great good fortune. I must tell you, Sir," added he, in a firm voice, "that there is nothing—absolutely nothing—to give you in requital for such aid. My friend's alternative is a prison, or be your debtor for what he cannot pay."

"I am content—perfectly content," said Roland. "There is no need to say another word on the matter. Do not suffer him to endure any anxiety we can spare him; tell him at once the thing is done."

"We must think over this a little," said Tiernay, musing. "Con is a difficult fellow to deal with; there must be something which shall give it the semblance of a loan; he must be made to believe it is only a change of creditors."

"Could we not arrange it without his knowledge, while you could affect to have made some settlement which has satisfied the others?"

"Too late—too late, for that; he has seen Hoare himself."

"Hoare!—the money-lender from Dublin?" said Cashel, blushing at the recollection of his own acquaintance with him.

"Ay, Sir, of course you know him! A man cannot enjoy such distinguished friendships as you have, without the aid of usurers!"

Cashel smiled good-humouredly, and went on:

"Where is this gentleman at present."

"Yonder," said Tiernay, pointing to the cottage; "but he intends shortly returning to the inn at the village, where perhaps it would be better to meet him than here. If you'll permit me, I'll just step in and say as much, and then we can stroll that way together."

Cashel consented, and his companion left him to do his errand. It was only as he stood alone, and had time for reflection, that he remembered his conversation with Kennyfeck in the morning, and learned that, with regard to ready money at least, he stood in a very different position from what he supposed. That there would be difficulties and legal obstacles innumerable made by Kennyfeck to any sale of property, he well knew; but he had made up his mind as to his course, and would not be thwarted. He had but space for these reflections, when Tiernay joined him, saying,

"So far all is well. Hoare will follow us in a few minutes, and, for privacy sake, I have made the rendezvous at my house."

"And Corrigan—how have you left him?" asked Cashel.

"Like one in a dream. He seems neither to know whether it be misfortune or the opposite which impends him. Were it not for Mary, his poor heart had given way long since. Ay, Sir, there is more true heroism in one day of that humble life, than in the boldest deed of bravery even you have ever witnessed."

Cashel did not speak, but, in the pressure of his arm against Tiernay's the other felt how the theme had touched him.

"You only know her by the graceful elegance of her manner, and the fascinations that, even to old men like myself, are a kind of sorcery; but I have seen her in every trial, where temper and mind, and heart and pride, are tested, and come through all victorious; draining the very wells of her own hopefulness to feed the exhausted fountain which age and disappointment had dried up; lending to manhood a courage greater than her own; ay, and more—showing that her temper could resist the jarring influences of misfortune, and, like the bright moon above the storm-lashed clouds, soar on, glorious and lustrous ever. What are men made of?" cried he,

energetically; "of what stuff are they formed, when such a girl as this can excite more admiration for her beauty, than for traits of character that ennoble humanity?"

"You speak with all a lover's warmth, Doctor," said Cashel, half smiling, while, in reality, the subject interested him deeply?

"And why not, Sir? I do love her, and with an affection that only such beings inspire. It is creatures like her that redeem years of disappointment and worldly disgust. It is in watching the single-heartedness of that young girl that I, an old man, hackneyed and hardened as I am, become trustful and hopeful of others. Love her!—to be sure I love her. And so would you, if the poor fopperies amid which you live but left you one moment free to think and feel as your own head and heart would lead you. I hope you take no heed of my rude speech, Sir," said he, hastily; "but it is the fault of my craft to believe that sweet things are only 'Placebos,' given but to earn the fee and amuse the patient."

"I thank you for it," said Cashel, pressing his hand; "few have ever cared to tell me truths."

"Say, rather, few have cared to resign their influence over you by showing they knew your weak points. Now, I have too deep an interest in *you*, and too slight a regard for any profit your acquaintance can render myself, to be swayed by this. You don't know—you cannot know—what a charm there is to an old fellow like myself, whose humble fortunes limit to a life of mere routine—to think that he has an opportunity of counselling one in your station—to feel that he has sown the seed of some good principle, that one day or other will bear its fruit. Yes, years hence, when you have forgotten the old village doctor—or if by chance remember him, only to recal his vulgarity or eccentricity—I will be an anxious watcher over you, flattering myself to think that I have had some share in instilling the precepts by which you are winning good men's esteem. These thoughts are poor men's treasures, but he that feels them would not barter them for gold."

"I have long wished for such a counsellor," said Cashel, fervently.

"The advice will not be the less stringent that it comes when you are heart-sick of frivolity," said Tiernay. "What could your fine company up yonder teach you? Such of them as are above mere folly, trade in vice. I have seen them all since they have assembled here, and I am no mean physiognomist, and there is but one among them deserving of better than the poor heartless life they're leading."

"I can guess whom you mean," said Roland, half pleased and half fearful.

"Well, she indeed would merit a better lot; and yet I would she were gone."

"Why so? Do you grudge us even a passing 'gleam of virtue's brightness?'"

"She is more dangerous than the veriest coquette that ever lured a man to ruin. It is in such as she, where noble qualities have run to waste, where generous sentiments and pure affections have been blighted by the cold chill of a world that fosters not such gifts, the peril is ever greatest; for her sake and for yours, I would she were gone."

As they spoke thus, they had reached the wide esplanade in front of the great house, from the windows of which lights were gleaming, while sounds of festivity and pleasure floated on the night air.

Tiernay halted for a second, and then said, "Who could believe that the owner of that princely mansion, filled as it is with pleasure-loving guests, and every adjunct that can promote enjoyment, should leave it, to wander on foot with a poor old village doctor, whose only merit is to utter unpalatable truths!"

"And be happier while doing so! add that, my worthy friend," said Cashel, pressing the arm that he held within his own.

"Come along, Sir; this dalliance is pleasanter to me than to you. I begin to feel that I may have done you good, and you should be a doctor to know the full ecstasy of that feeling. Let us now move on, or this man will be before us." And so saying, they moved briskly forward towards the village of Dunkeeran.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### SHYLOCK DEMANDS HIS BOND.

The debts we make by plighted vows,
Bear heaviest interest, ever!

HAYWOOD.

THE Doctor's little parlour was the very "ideal" of snugness; there was nothing which had the faintest resemblance to luxury save the deep-cushioned arm-chair, into which he pressed Cashel at entering, but there were a hundred objects that told of home. The book-shelves, no mean indication of the owner's "trempe," were filled with a mixture of works on medicine, the older English dramatists, and that class of writers who prevailed in the days of Steele and Addison. There was a microscope on one table, with a great

bunch of fresh-plucked fern beside it. A chess-board, with an unfinished game—a problem from a newspaper, for he had no antagonist—stood on another table; while full in front of the fire, with an air that betokened no mean self-importance, sat a large black cat, with a red leather collar, the very genius of domesticity. As Cashel's eyes took a hasty survey of the room, they rested on a picture—it was the only one there—which hung over the mantelpiece. It was a portrait of Mary Leicester, and although a mere water-colour sketch, an excellent likeness, and most characteristic in air and attitude.

"Ay!" said Tiernay, who caught the direction of his glance, "a birthday present to me! She had promised to dine with me, but the day, like most Irish days, when one prays for sunshine, rained torrents; and so she sent me that sketch, with a note, a merry bit of doggrel verse, whose merit lies in its local allusions to a hundred little things, and people only known to ourselves; but for this, I'd be guilty of breach of faith and show it to you."

"Is the drawing, too, by her own hand?"

"Yes; she is a clever artist, and might, it is said by competent judges, have attained high excellence as a painter, had she pursued the study. I remember an illustration of the fact worth mentioning. Carringford, the well-known miniature-painter, who was making a tour of this country a couple of years back, passed some days at the cottage, and made a picture of old Con Corrigan, for which, I may remark passingly, poor Mary paid all her little pocket-money, some twenty guineas, saved up from Heaven knows how long. Con did not know this of course, and believed the portrait was a compliment to his granddaughter. Carringford's ability is well known, and there is no need to say the picture was admirably painted; but still it wanted character; it had not the playful ease, the gentle, indulgent pleasantry that marks my old friend's features; in fact, it was hard and cold, not warm, generous, and genial; so I thought, and so Mary thought, and accordingly, scarcely had the artist taken his leave, when she set to work herself, and made a portrait, which, if inferior as a work of art, was infinitely superior as a likeness. It was Con himself; it had the very sparkle of his mild blue eye, the mingled glance of drollery and softness, the slightly curled mouth, as though some quaint conceit was lingering on the lip! all his own. Mary's picture hung on one side of the chimney, and Carringford's at the other, and so they stood when the painter came through, from Limerick, and passed one night at Tubber-beg, on his way to Dublin. I breakfasted there that morning, and I remember, on entering the room, I was surprised to see the frame of Carringford's portrait empty, and a bank-note, carefully folded, stuck in the corner. 'What does that mean?' said I to him, for we were alone at the time.

"'It means simply that *my* picture cannot stand such competitorship as *that*,' said he; '*mine* was a miniature, *that* is the man himself.' I will not say one-half of the flatteries he uttered, but I have heard from others since, that he speaks of this picture as a production of high merit. Dear girl! that meagre sketch may soon have a sadder interest connected with it; it may be all that I shall possess of her! Yes, Mr. Cashel, your generosity may stave off the pressure of one peril, but there is another, from which nothing but flight will rescue my poor friend."

A sharp knocking at the door here interrupted the Doctor's recital, and soon Hoare's voice was heard without, inquiring if Dr. Tiernay was at home?

Hoare's easy familiarity, as he entered, seemed to suffer a slight shock on observing Roland Cashel, who received him with cold politeness.

Tiernay, who saw at once that business alone would relieve the awkwardness of the scene, briefly informed the other that Mr. Cashel was there to learn the exact amount and circumstances of Corrigan's liabilities, with a view to a final settlement of them.

"Very pleasing intelligence this, Doctor," said the money-lender, rubbing his hands, "and, I am free to own, very surprising also! Am I to enter into an explanation of the peculiar causes of these liabilities, Doctor, or to suppose," said he, "that Mr. Cashel is already conversant with them?"

"You are to suppose, Sir," interposed Cashel, "that Mr. Cashel is aware of every circumstance upon which he does not ask you for further information." There was a sternness in the way he spoke that abashed the other, who, opening a huge pocket-book on the table, proceeded to scan its contents with diligence; while Tiernay, whose agitation was great, sat watching him without speaking.

"The transactions," said Hoare, "date from some years back, as these bills will show, and consist, for the most part, in drafts, at various dates, by Mr. Leicester, of South Bank, New Orleans, on Cornelius Corrigan, Esq., of Tubbermore. Some of these have been duly honoured; indeed, at first, Mr. Corrigan was punctuality itself; but bad seasons, distress at home here, greater demands, the consequence of some commercial losses sustained by Mr. Leicester in the States, all coming together, the bills were not met as usual; renewals were given—and, when it comes to that, Mr. Cashel, I need scarcely say difficulties travel by special train." No one joined in the little laugh by which Mr. Hoare welcomed his own attempt at pleasantry, and he went on: "At first we managed tolerably well. Mr. Corrigan devoted a portion of his income to liquidate these claims; he made certain sales of property; he reduced his establishment; in fact, I believe, he really made every sacrifice consistent with his position——"

"No, Sir," broke in Tiernay, "but consistent with bare subsistence."

The violent tone of the interruption startled the money-lender, who hastened to concur with the sentiment, while he faltered out—

"Remember, gentlemen, I speak only from hearsay; of myself I know nothing."

"Go on with your statement, Sir," said Cashel, peremptorily.

"My statement," said Hoare, provoked at the tone assumed towards him, "resolves itself into a debt of three thousand seven hundred and forty-eight pounds some odd shillings. There are the bills. The sums due for interest and commission are noted down, and will, I believe, be found duly correct."

"Three thousand seven hundred pounds in less than five years!" ejaculated Tiernay. "What iniquity!"

"If your expression is intended to apply to anything in the conduct of this transaction, Sir," said Hoare, growing pale with passion as he spoke, "I beg you to remember that there is such a thing in the land as redress for libel."

"If the laws will warrant sixty per cent., they may well punish the man who calls it infamy," said Tiernay, almost choking with anger.

"That will do, gentlemen, that will do," said Hoare, replacing the bills in the pocket-book, while his fingers trembled with passion. "I was not aware that your object in this meeting was to insult me. I'll not expose myself a second time to such a casualty. I'll thank you to hand me that bill, Sir?" This request was addressed to Cashel, who, with his eyes riveted on a document which he held in both hands, sat perfectly unmindful of all around him.

"If you will have the kindness to give me that bill, Sir?" said Hoare, again.

"Shylock wants his bond," said Tiernay, who walked up and down the room with clenched hands, and brows knitted into one deep furrow.

Hoare turned a scowling glance towards him, but not trusting himself to reply, merely repeated his question to Cashel.

"How came you by this?" cried Roland, rising from the table, and holding out a written paper towards Hoare—"I ask, Sir, how came you by this?" reiterated he, while the paper shook with the hand that held it.

"Oh! I perceive," said Hoare; "that document has no concern with the case before us; it refers to another and very different transaction."

"This is no answer to my question, Sir," said Cashel, sternly; "I asked, and I ask you again, how it came into your hands?"

"Don't you think, Sir, that it would be more appropriate to express your

regret at having examined a paper not intended to have been submitted to you?" said Hoare, in a tone half insolent, half deferential.

"I saw my name upon it," said Cashel; "coupled, too, with that of another, of whom I preserve too many memories to treat anything lightly wherein he bears a part; besides, there can be but little indiscretion in reading that to which I had attached my own signature. And now, once more, Sir, how do I see it in your possession?"

"Really, Mr. Cashel, when the question is put in this tone and manner, I am much disposed to refuse an answer. I can see nothing in our relative situations that can warrant the assumption of these airs towards *me*."

"Shylock, again!" exclaimed Tiernay, who continued to pace the room during this scene with hasty strides.

"Not so, Sir," said Cashel, as Hoare moved towards the door, against which, Roland now placing a chair, sat down. "Out of this room you shall not stir, till I hear a distinct and clear account of the circumstances by which I find you in possession of this paper."

"You have no right, Sir, to demand such an answer."

"Possibly not, legally speaking," said Cashel, whose voice became calmer and deeper as his passion increased. "You are more conversant with law than I am, and so I take it that your opinion is correct. But I have the right which a good conscience and strong will beget, and I tell you again, you'll not leave this room before you satisfy me, or you'll not leave it living."

"I call you to witness, Dr. Tiernay," said Hoare, whose accents trembled with fear and anger together, "that this is a case of false imprisonment—that a threat against my life has been uttered, if I do not surrender the possession of certain papers."

"Nothing of the kind," broke in Tiernay; "there is no thought of taking anything from you by force. Mr. Roland Cashel—doubtless for good reasons of his own—has asked you a question, which you, demurring to answer, he tells you that you shall not leave the room till you do."

"And do you fancy, Sir, that such conduct is legal?" cried Hoare.

"I cannot say," rejoined Tiernay; "but that it is far more mild and merciful than I could have expected under the circumstances, I am perfectly ready to aver."

"May I read the paper out?" said Hoare, with a malicious scowl at Cashel.

"There is no need that you should, Sir," said Roland; "its contents are known to me, whom alone they concern."

"You can, I opine, have no objection that your friend, Dr. Tiernay should hear them?"

"I repeat, Sir, that with the contents of that paper, neither you nor any one else has any concern; they relate to me, and to me alone."

"Then I must labour under some misapprehension," said Hoare, affectedly; "I had fancied there was another person at least equally interested."

"Will you dare, Sir!" said Roland; and in the thick guttural utterance there was that which made the other tremble with fear.

"If the matter be one, then," said he, rallying into his former assurance, "that you deem best kept secret, it would be perhaps a judicious preliminary to any conversation on the subject, that Dr. Tiernay should withdraw."

"I only await Mr. Cashel's pleasure," said Tiernay, moving towards the door.

"Then you will remain, Sir," said Roland, firmly. "Remain, and listen to what this gentleman has so menacingly alluded. Here it is: it is the promise, given under my hand, that I will espouse the daughter of a certain Don Pedro Rica, to whom, in the date herein annexed, I have been this day betrothed; or, in forfeiture of such pledge, pay down the sum of seventy thousand dollars, thereby obtaining a full release from the conditions of the contract. It was the rash pledge of a young and thoughtless boy, with regard to one who neither accepted his affection nor acknowledged the contract. I do not say this to absolve myself from the forfeiture, which I am ready to acquit this hour. I speak of it, that, as a man of honour, I may not seem to pay a debt of feeling by a check on my banker."

"But this betrothal," said Tiernay; "what does it imply?"

"It is a ceremony common enough in Old Spain and her once colonies, and is simply the public recognition of a private promise of marriage."

"You have forgotten two circumstances, Sir," said Hoare, whose eyes never quitted Cashel's face.

"Which are they?"

"One is, that this contract should be either fulfilled, or the forfeit paid, within two years; twenty-one months of which have already expired."

"True!—and the other condition?"

"That the acceptance or refusal of the forfeit is optional with Don Pedro, who may, at his pleasure, select which clause he likes—the marriage or the penalty."

"I never acknowledged this interpretation of the document," said Cashel, reddening. "I know Don Pedro did, and there we were at issue. Methinks it were somewhat hard to compel a marriage distasteful to both parties, and only to suit the speculations of a ruined adventurer."

"I hope, Sir, the likelihood of future relationship will moderate the warmth of your language."

"And is the man fool enough to fancy such a promise could be legally enforced in this country?" said Tiernay.

"He is not without the opinion of learned counsel," said Hoare; "who are strongly of opinion that the interpretations Columbian law would put upon the document would be recognised by our own Courts, and recognise the marriage as such."

"And does he, or do you, suppose," said Cashel, indignantly, "that I could expose her name, were I indifferent about my own, to be bandied about your assize courts, and printed in newspapers, and made the gossip of the town for a nine-days' wonder?" He stopped, for he saw by the elation of Hoare's features with what triumph this avowal had been listened to. "And now, Sir, enough has been said of this; I come back to my former question—How came you by this paper?"

"I received it from Don Pedro, with whom I have had much business intercourse, and who left it in my hands a few days back."

"Then he is in the country?" said Cashel, anxiously.

Hoare nodded an assent.

"Here, in Ireland! and is Mari——" He stopped suddenly, remembering to whom he was speaking; but Hoare, as if eager to show an intimacy with names and events, said,

"Yes, Sir, she is also here."

Cashel became silent; his mind, a very chaos of confused thought; memories of his buccaneer life—its lawless habits—its wild companionship—its adventures of love and war—of play—of heroism—and of mad debauch. The Villa and Maritaña were before him as last he saw her at the fountain; and from these he came to his fine and lordly friendships, with all their fictitious warmth; and he began to fancy how would his present society—the very guests at that moment beneath his roof—receive or recognise his old associates.

The deep preoccupation of his look suggested to Tiernay's mind the notion that Cashel was overwhelmed by the intelligence he had just received, and drawing close to him, he said, in a whisper,

"That fellow is watching and enjoying your confusion; put a bolder face on the matter, and we'll see what is best to be done."

Roland started, and then, as if by an effort chasing away an unpleasant thought, he said to Hoare,

"Our first business is Mr. Corrigan's. The sum due is ——"

"Three thousand seven hundred and forty."

"Will you accept my bill for this?"

"At what date, Sir?" said Hoare, cautiously.

"At whatever date you please; a month or a week."

"A month be it."

"Does that release Mr. Corrigan from every claim so far as your principa. is concerned?"

"All, up to this date."

"By which, probably, you would imply, that new liabilities may begin again. Is that so?"

"I think, from the nature of Mr. Leicester's claim, such an event is not impossible."

"Never mind the threat," whispered Tiernay—"it is but a threat."

"As to the other affair," said Cashel, approaching Hoare, "I will accompany you to town. I will see Don Pedro myself."

"That will be difficult, Sir. I am not at liberty to mention his place of abode; nor does he wish his presence here to be known."

"But to *me*," said Cashel, "this objection cannot apply."

"His orders are positive, and without qualification; but any proposition which you desire to submit——"

"Can come through Mr. Hoare?" said Cashel, sneeringly. "I prefer doing these things in person, Sir."

"Leave this to me," whispered Tiernay; "I'll manage him better."

Cashel squeezed his friend's arm in assent, and turned away; while Hoare, reseating himself, proceeded to draw out the bill for Cashel's signature.

"You are aware," said Tiernay, "that Corrigan can give you nothing but personal security for this sum, and the lease of Tubber-beg?" But Cashel did not heed the remark, deep as he was in his own reflections. "There is a small sum—a few thousand pounds—of Mary's, settled at her mother's marriage. You are not attending to me," said he, perceiving the preoccupation of Roland's look. "I was mentioning that Mary Leicester——"

"Yes," said Cashel, talking his thoughts aloud, "to marry her would, indeed, be the true solution of the difficulty."

"What did you say?" whispered Tiernay, upon whose ear the muttered words fell distinctly.

"She would refuse me," Roland went on; "the more certainly that I am rich. I know her well; the rank, the station, the thousand flatteries that wealth bestows, would be things for her mockery if unallied with power."

"You are wrong, quite wrong," said Tiernay; "her ambition is of ferent order. Mary Leicester——"

"Mary Leicester!" echoed Cashel; and, in his suddenly awakened look, Tiernay at once perceived that some mistake had occurred. Hoare relieved the awkwardness of the moment as he said,

"This wants but your signature, Sir, and the matter is finished."

Cashel wrote his name on the bill and was turning away, when Hoare said,

"These are the bills; they are now your property, Sir."

"For what purpose?"

"They are vouchers for your claim on Mr. Corrigan," said Hoare.

"His word will suffice," said Cashel; and gathering them up, he hurled them into the fire.

"A costly blaze that," said Hoare, as he watched the conflagration.

"Speak to him, Doctor; learn what you can of Rica for me; if money will do it, I'll not quarrel with the price," said Cashel to Tiernay, in a low tone. "Another point—I was nigh forgetting it—you'll not tell Mr. Corrigan how the matter has been arranged. Promise me this. Nay, I have a reason for it—a reason you shall hear to-morrow or next day, and will acknowledge to be good. Keep my secret for a month; I ask no longer."

"For a month, then, I am silent," said Tiernay.

"Let me see you to-morrow early," said Cashel. "Will you breakfast with me?"

"No: I'll not risk my character by going twice to your grand house in the same week; besides, I am going to Limerick."

"Good night, then," said Cashel; "good night, Sir." And with a formal bow to Hoare, Roland left the room, and took his way homeward alone.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### CIGARS, ECARTE, AND HAZARD.

The Devil's back-parlour—a bachelor's room
MILYARD.

WHILE Cashel continued his way homeward a very joyous party had assembled in Lord Charles Frobisher's room, who were endeavouring, by the united merits of cigars, écarté, hazard, and an excellent supper, of which they partook at intervals, to compensate themselves for the unusual dulness of the drawing-room. It is well known how often the least entertaining individuals in general society become the most loquacious members of a

party assembled in this fashion. The restraints which had held them in check before are no longer present. Their loud speech and empty laughter are not any longer under ban, and they are tolerated by better men, pretty much as children are endured, because at least they are natural.

At a round table in the middle of the room were a group engaged at hazard. Upton was deep in écarté with his brother officer, Jennings, while Frobisher lounged about, sipping weak negus, and making his bets at either table as fancy or fortune suggested. The supper-table had few votaries; none, indeed, were seated at it save Meek, who, with a newspaper on his knee, seemed singularly out of place in the noisy gathering.

"Eleven's the nick—eleven! I say, Charley, have at you for a pony," called out a boyish-looking Dragoon, from the middle table.

"You're under age, young gentleman," said Frobisher; "I can't afford to bet with you. Wait a moment, Upton, I'll back you this time. Twenty sovereigns—will you have it?"

"Done!" said Jennings, and the game began.

"The King," cried Upton; "I propose."

"To which of them?" said a sharp-looking Infantry Captain, behind his chair.

"Olivia, of course," slipped in Jennings.

"I'd give fifty pounds to know if they have the money people say," cried Upton.

"Meek can tell you—*he* knows everything. I say, Downie," said Jennings, "come here for a moment, and enlighten us on a most interesting point."

"Oh dear! what is it? This room is so very cold. Don't you think, Frobisher, that a double door would be advisable?"

"A green one, with a centre pane of glass, would make it devilish like a 'hell,'" said Upton; upon which the company all laughed approvingly.

"What is it you want?" said Meek, approaching, glass in hand.

"Play out the game, and have your gossip afterwards," said Frobisher, who felt far more anxious about the fate of his twenty pounds than for the result of the conversation.

"A Queen of Hearts," said Upton, leading; then, turning to Meek, said, "These Kennyfeck girls—can you tell what the figure is?"

"Poor dear things," said Meek, piteously; "they should be very well off."

"I score two!" said Upton. "Well, have they twenty thousand each?"

"I should say more. Oh dear me! they must have more! Kennyfeck holds a heavy mortgage on Kilgoff's estate, and has a great deal of other property."

"Then it would be a good thing, Meek, eh?" said Jennings.

"Game!" cried Upton, showing his cards upon the table.

"There is so much chaffing about girls and their fortunes, one can't play his game here," said Jennings, as he threw down a handful of gold on the board.

"Who was it ordered the post-horses for to-morrow?" said a youth at the supper-table. "The MacFarlines?"

"No; Lord Kilgoff."

"I assure you," cried a third, "it was the Kennyfecks. There has been a 'flare-up' about money between Cashel and him, and it is said he'll lose the agency. Who'll get it, I wonder?"

"Tom Linton, of course," said the former speaker. "I'd wager he is gone off to Dublin to furbish up securities, or something of that kind."

"Who'd give Tom trust, or go bail for him?" said Frobisher.

A very general laugh did not sound like a contradiction of the sentiment.

"I heard a week ago," said the Cornet, "that Kilgoff would stand security to any amount for him."

"Ah, that comes of my Lady's good opinion of him!" cried Jennings.

"Nay, don't say that, it looks so ill-natured," sighed Meek; "and there is really nothing in it. You know she and Tom were old friends. Oh dear, it was so sad!"

"Where does Cashel get such execrable champagne?" said an Infantry man with a very wry expression of face.

"It's dry wine, that's all," said Frobisher, "and about the best ever imported."

"We'd be very sorry to drink it at our mess, my Lord, I know that," said the other, evidently nettled at the correction.

"Yours is the Fifty-third?" said a Guardsman.

"No; the Thirty-fifth."

"Aw! same thing," sighed he; and he stooped to select a cigar.

"I wish the Kennyfecks were not going," said Upton, drawing his chair closer to Meek's; "there are so few houses one meets them at."

"You should speak to Linton about that," whispered Meek.

"Here's Jim's health—hip, hip, hurrah!" cried out a white moustached boy, who had joined a Hussar regiment a few weeks before, and was now excessively tipsy.

The laughter at this toast was increased by Meek's holding out his glass to be filled as he asked, "Of course—whose health is it?"

"One of Frobisher's trainers," said Upton, readily.

"No, it's no such thing," hiccupped the Hussar. "I was proposing

bumper to the lightest snaffle hand from this to Doncaster—the best judge of a line of country in the kingdom——"

"That's me," said a jolly voice, and at the same instant the door was flung wide, and Tom Linton, splashed from the road, and travel-stained, entered.

"I must say, gentlemen, you are no churls of your wit and pleasantry, for, as I came up the stairs, I could hear every word you were saying."

"Oh dear, how dreadful! and we were talking of *you*, too," said Meek, with a piteous air, that made every one laugh.

A thousand questions as to where he had been—whom with—and what for? all burst upon Linton, who only escaped importunity by declaring that he was half dead with hunger, and would answer nothing till he had eaten.

"So," said he, at length, after having devoted twenty minutes to a grouse pie of most cunning architecture, "you never guessed where I had been?"

"Oh! we had guesses enough, if that served any purpose."

"I thought it was a bolt, Tom," said Upton; "but as *she* appeared at breakfast, as usual, I saw my mistake."

"Meek heard that you had gone over to Downing-street to ask for the Irish Secretaryship," said Jennings.

"I said you had been to have a talk with Scott about 'Regulator;' was I far off the mark?"

"Mrs. White suggested an uncle's death," said Frobisher; "but uncles don't die now-a-days."

"Did you buy the colt?—Have you backed 'Runjeet Singh?'—Are you to have the agency?—How goes on the borough canvass?" and twenty similar queries now poured in on him.

"Well, I see," cried he, laughing, "I shall sadly disappoint all the calculations founded on my shrewdness and dexterity, for the whole object of my journey was to secure a wardrobe for our fancy ball, which I suddenly heard of as being at Limerick; and so, not trusting the mission to another, I started off myself, and here I am, with materials for more Turks, Monks, Sailors, Watchmen, Greeks, Juggiers, and Tyrolese, than ever travelled in anything save a caravan with one horse."

"Are your theatrical intentions all abandoned?" cried Jennings.

"I trust not," said Linton; "but I heard that Miss Meek had decided on the ball to come off first."

"Hip! hip! hip!" was moaned out, in very lachrymose tone, from a sofa where the boy Hussar, very sick and very tipsy, lay stretched on his back.

"Who is that yonder?" asked Linton.

"A young fellow of ours," said Jennings, indolently.

"I thought they made their heads better at Sandhurst."

"They used in my time," said Upton; "but you have no idea how the thing has gone down."

"Quite true," chimed in another; "and I don't think we've seen the worst of it yet. Do you know, they talk of an examination for all candidates for commissions!"

"Well, I must say," lisped the Guardsman, "I believe it would be an improvement for the 'Line.'"

"The Household Brigade can dispense with information," said an Infantry Captain.

"I demur to the system altogether," said Linton. "Physicians tell us that the intellectual development is always made at the expense of the physical, and as one of the duties of a British army is to suff serve" fever in the West Indies and cholera in the East, I vote for le and s th! w strong in constitution and intact in strength as vacant heads a u thou less skulls can make them."

Jenni kfast, "and Meek Oh Secre I sai In off ti Mrs eve't die Did w pave

"Oh dear me! yes," sighed Meek, who, by one of his mock co effectually blinded the less astute portion of the audience from ton's impertinence.

"What has been doing here in my absence?" said Linton; "I no event worth recording for me?"

"There is a story," said Upton, "that Cashel and Kennyfe quarrelled—a serious rupture, they say, and not to be repaired."

"How did it originate?—Something about the management of perty?"

"No, no—it was a row among the women. They laid some scheme for making Cashel propose for one of the girls."

"Not Olivia, I hope?" said Upton, as he lighted a new cigar.

"I rather suspect it was," interposed another.

"In any case, Linton," cried Jennings, "you are to be the gainer, for the rumour says, Cashel will give you the agency, with his house to live in, and a very jolly thing to spend, while he goes abroad to travel."

"If this news be true, Tom," said Frobisher, "I'll quarter my yearlings on you; there is a capital run for young horses in those flats along the river."

"The house is cold at this season," said Meek, with a sad smile; "but I think it would be very endurable in the autumn months. I shouldn't say but you may see us here again at that time."

"I hope 'ours' may be quartered at Limerick," said an Infantry man, with a most suggestive look at the comforts of the apartment, which were a pleasing contrast to barrack-room accommodation.

"Make yourselves perfectly at home here, gentlemen, when that good time comes," said Linton, with one of his careless laughs. "I tell you frankly, that if Cashel does make me such a proposal—a step which, from his knowledge of my indolent, lazy habits, is far from likely—I only accept on one condition."

"What is that?" cried a dozen voices.

"That you will come and pass your next Christmas here."

"Agreed—agreed!" was chorused on every side.

"I suspect, from that bit of spontaneous hospitality," whispered Frobisher to Meek, "that the event is something below doubtful."

Meek nodded.

"What is Charley saying?" cried Linton, whose quick eye caught the glance interchanged between the two.

"I was telling Meek," said Frobisher, "that I don't put faith enough in the condition to accept the invitation."

"Indeed!" said Linton, while he turned to the table and filled his glass, to hide a passing sign of mortification.

"Tom Linton, for a man's agent, seems pretty like what old Frederick used to call, keeping a Goat for a Gardener."

"You are fond of giving the odds, Frobisher," said Linton, who, for some minutes, continued to take glass after glass of champagne; "now, what's your bet that I don't do the honours here next Christmas-day?"

"I can't say what you mean," said Frobisher, languidly. "I've seen you do 'the honours' at more than one table where you were the guest."

"This, I suppose, is meant for a pleasantry, my Lord?" said Linton, while his face became flushed with passion.

"It is meant for fact," said Frobisher, with a steady coolness in his air and accent.

"A fact! and not in jest, then!" said he, approaching where the other sat, and speaking in a low voice.

"That's very quarrelsome wine, that dry champagne," said Frobisher, lazily; "don't drink any more of it."

Linton tried to smile; the effort, at first not very successful, became easier after a moment, and it was with a resumption of his old manner he said,

"I'll take you two to one in fifties that I act the host here this day twelvemonth."

"You hear that offer, gentlemen?" said Frobisher, addressing the party "Of course it is meant without any reservation, and so I take it."

He produced a betting-book as he said this, and began to write in it with his pencil.

"Would you prefer it in hundreds?" said Linton

Frobisher nodded an assent.

"Or shall we do the thing sportingly, and say two thousand to one?" continued he.

"Two thousand to one be it," said Frobisher, while the least possible smile might be detected on his usually immovable features. "There is no knowing how to word this bet," said he, at last, after two or three efforts, followed by as many erasures; "you must write it yourself."

Linton took the pencil, and wrote rapidly for a few seconds.

"Will that do?" said he.

And Frobisher read to himself—"'Mr. Linton, two thousand to one with Lord C. Frobisher, that he, T. L., on the anniversary of this day, shall preside as master of the house Tubbermore, by due right and title, and not by any favour, grace, or sanction of any one whatsoever.'"

"Yes; that will do, perfectly," said Frobisher, as he closed the book, and restored it to his pocket.

"Was the champagne so strong as you expected?" whispered Upton, as he passed behind Frobisher's chair.

A very knowing nod of acquiescence was the only reply.

Indeed, it did not require the practised shrewdness of Lord Charles, or his similarly sharp-eyed friends, to see that Linton's manner was very different from his habitual calm collectedness, while he continued to drink on, with the air of a man that was resolved on burying his faculties in the excitement of wine.

Meek slipped away soon after, and, at Linton's suggestion, a rouge-et-noir bank was formed, at which the play became high, and his own losses very considerable.

It was already daylight, and the servants were stirring in the house ere the party broke up.

"Master Tom has had a squeeze to-night," said Jennings, as he was bidding Upton good-by at his door.

"I can't understand it at all," replied the other. "He played without judgment, and betted rashly on every side. It was far more like Roland Cashel than Tom Linton."

"Well, you remember he said—to be sure, it was after drinking a quantity of wine—'Master Roland and I may change characters yet Let us see if he can play "Linton," as well as I can "Cashel."'"

"He's so deep, that I wouldn't say but there is something under all this." And so they parted, sadly puzzled what interpretation to put on conduct, the mere result of a passing intemperance; for so it is, "your cunning men" are never reputed to be so deep by the world as when by some accident they have forgotten their craft.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### MR. KENNYFECK AMONG THE BULLS.

With a bright lie upon his hook,
He played mankind, as anglers play a fish.

COTTER.

An hour's sleep and a cold bath restored Linton to himself, and ere the guests of Tubbermore were stirring, he was up and ready for the day. He dressed with more than usual care, and having ordered a horse to be saddled and a groom to follow him, he sauntered out into the park, taking the road that led to the village.

The groom rapidly overtook him; and then, mounting, he rode at a brisk trot down the road, and drew up at the door of the Doctor's house. To his question, "If Mr. Tiernay were at home?" he received for answer, that "He had set out for Limerick that morning," nor did the servant know when he might be expected back.

For a moment this intelligence appeared to derange his plans, but he rallied soon, and turning his horse's head towards Tubbermore, muttered to himself: "As well—perhaps better as it is." He rode fast till he gained the wood, and then dismounting, he gave the horse to the groom, with directions to go home, as he would return on foot.

He stood looking after the horses as they retired, and it seemed as if his thoughts were following them, so intent was his gaze; but, long after they had disappeared, he remained standing in the same place, his features still wearing the same expression of highly-wrought occupation. The spot where he stood was a little eminence, from which the view stretched, upon one side, over the waving woods of the demesne; and, on the other, showed glimpses of the Shannon, as, in its sweeping curves, it indented the margin of the grounds. Perhaps not another point could be found which displayed so happily the extent and importance of the demesne, and yet concealed so well whatever detracted from its picturesque effect. The neighbouring

village of Derraheeny—a poor, straggling, ruinous street of thatched hovels, like most Irish villages—was altogether hidden from view, while of the great house itself, an object with few pretensions to architectural elegance, only so much was visible as indicated its size and extent. The little cottage of Tubber-beg, however, could be seen entire, glittering in the morning's sun like a gem, its bright-leaved hollies and dark laurels forming a little grove of foliage in the midst of winter's barrenness.

If this was by far the most striking object of the picture, it was not that which attracted most of Linton's attention. On the contrary, his eye ranged more willingly over the wide woods which stretched for miles along the river's side, and rose and fell in many a gentle undulation inland. A common-place observer, had such been there to mark him, would have pronounced him one passionately devoted to scenery; a man who loved to watch the passing cloud-shadows of a landscape, enjoying with all a painter's delight the varying tints, the graceful lines, the sharp-thrown shadows, and the brilliant lights of a woodland picture; a deeper physiognomist would, however, have seen that the stern stare, and the compressed lip, the intense preoccupation which every feature exhibited, did not denote a mind bent upon such themes.

"Tom Linton, of Tubbermore," said he, at length—and it seemed as if uttering the words gave relief to his overburdened faculties, for his face relaxed, and his habitual, easy smile returned to his mouth—"Linton, of Tubbermore; it sounds well, too.

"And then the great game! that game for which I have pined so long and wished so ardently—which I have stood by and seen others play and lose, where I could have won—ay, won rank, honour, station, and fame. The heaviest curse that lies on men like me is to watch those who rise to eminence in the world and know their utter shallowness and incapacity. There will soon be an end to that now. Stand by, gentlemen; make way, my Lords Charles and Harry; it is Tom Linton's turn—not Linton the 'Adventurer,' as you were gracious enough to call him—not the bear-leader of a Marquis, or the hanger-on of his Grace the Duke, but your equal in rank and fortune—more than your equal in other things; the man who knows you all thoroughly, not fancying your deficiencies and speculating on your short-comings, as your vulgar adversaries, your men of cotton constituencies, are wont to do, but the man who has seen you in your club and your drawing-room, who has eaten, drunk, betted, played and lived with you all! who knows your tactics well, and can expound your 'aristocratic prejudices better than ever a Quaker of them all!'—Not but," said he, after a pause "another line would satisfy me equally. The Peerage, with such

fortune as this, is no inordinate ambition; a few years in the House, of that dogged, unmanageable conduct Englishmen call independence—a capriciousness in voting—the repute of refusing office, and so on. There's no originality in the thought, but it succeeds as well as if there were! Besides, if hard pressed, I can be a Romanist, and, as times go, with every party; that is a strong claim. And why not Lord Linton? I have no doubt"—and he laughed as he spoke this—"there *is* a Peerage in the family already, if I only knew where to look for it!

"And now, sufficient of speculation! to open the campaign!" So saying, he descended the knoll, and took the path which led to the cottage. As he drew near the wicket, he saw a man lounging beside it, in all that careless indifference which an Irish peasant can assume, and soon perceived it was Tom Keane, the gatekeeper.

"Good morrow, Tom; how comes it you are up here so early?"

"'Tis in throuble I am, your Honer," said he, taking off his hat, and putting on that supplicating look so characteristic of his class. "The master's going to turn me out of the little place beyant."

"What for?"

"For nothing at all, your Honer: that's just it; but ould Kennyfeck put him up to it."

"Up to what? That seems the whole question."

"Your Honer may remimber, that when you came here first, the cattle of the neighbours was used to come and pick a mouthful of grass—and poor grass it was—bekase there was no way of keeping them out. Well, when the master came down, and all the people, by coorse the cows and pigs couldn't be let in as afore; for, as the agint said, it was a disgrace to see them under the nose of the quality, running about as if it was Donnybrook fair! 'Don't let them appear here again, Tom Keane,' says he, 'or 't will be worse for you.' And sorra one ever I let in since that, till it was dark night. But ould Mr. Kennyfeck, the other evening, takes it into his head to walk into the park, and comes right into a crowd of two-year-old bulls, and didn't know a bit where he was, till a man called out, 'Lie down on your face, for the love of the Virgin, or you are a dead man. The bullsheens is comin'!' And down he lay, sure enough, and hard work they had to get him up afterwards, for the herd went over him as the man drov' them off; and what between bruises and fear, he kept his bed two days; but the worst of it was, the spalpeens said that they paid threepence apiece for the bullsheens every night for the grass, and it was to me they gave it."

"Which, of course, was untrue?" said Linton, smiling knowingly.

"By coorse it was!" said Tom, with a laugh, whose meaning there was no

mistaking; "and so, I'm to be turned out of 'the gate,' and to lose my few acres of ground, and be thrun on the wide world, just for sake of an attorney!"

"It is very hard—very hard indeed."

"Isn't it now, your Honer?"

"A case of destitution, completely; what the newspapers call 'extermination.'"

"Exactly, Sir—tarnination, and nothing less."

"But how comes it that you are up here, on that account?"

"I was thinking, Sir, if I saw Miss Mary, and could get her to spake a word to the master—they say she can do what she plazes with him."

"Indeed!—who says so?"

"The servants' hall says it; and so does Mr. Corrigan's ould butler. He towld me the other day that he hoped he'd be claning the plate up at the big house before he died."

"How so?" said Linton, affecting not to catch the intention of the remark.

"Just that he was to be butler at the Hall when the master was married to Miss Mary."

"And so, I suppose, this is very likely to happen?"

"Sure yer Honer knows betther than ignorant craytures like us; but faix, if walking about in the moonlight there, among the flowers, and talking together like whisperin', is any sign, I wouldn't wonder if it came about."

"Indeed! and they have got that far?"

"Ay, faith!" said Tom, with a significance of look only an Irishman or an Italian can call up.

"Well, I had no suspicion of this," said Linton, with a frankness meant to invite further confidence.

"An' why would yer Honer? Sure wasn't it always on the evenings, when the company was all together in the great house, that Mr. Cashel used to steal down here and tie his horse to the wicket, and then gallop back again at full speed, so that the servants towld me he was never missed out of the room."

"And does she like him—do they say she likes him?"

"Not like him wid a place such as this!" said Tom, waving his hand towards the wide-spreading fields and woods of the demesne. "Bathershin sure the Queen of England might be proud of it!"

"Very true," said Linton, affecting to be struck by the shrewdness of the speaker.

"See now," said Tom, who began to feel a certain importance from

being listened to, "I know faymales well, and so I ought! but take the nicest, quietest, and most innocent one among them, and by my conscience ye'll see, 'tis money and money's worth she cares for more nor the best man that ever stepped! Tell her 'tis silk she'll be wearin', and goold in her ears, and ye may be as ould and ugly as Tim Hogan at the cross roods!"

"You haven't a good opinion of the fair sex, Thomas," said Linton, carelessly, for he was far less interested in his speculations than his facts. "Well, as to your own case,—leave that in my hands. I may not have all the influence of Miss Leicester, but I suspect that I can do what you want on this occasion." And without waiting for the profuse expressions of his gratitude, Linton passed on and entered the garden, through which a little path led directly to the door of the cottage.

"At breakfast, I suppose?" said Linton to the servant who received him.

"The master is, Sir; but Miss Mary isn't well this morning."

"Nothing of consequence, I hope?"

"Only a headache from fatigue, Sir." So saying, he ushered Linton, whose visits were admitted on the most intimate footing, into the room where Mr. Corrigan sat by himself at the breakfast-table.

"Alone, Sir!" said Linton, as he closed the door behind him, and conveying in his look an air of surprise and alarm.

"Yes, Mr. Linton, almost the only time I remember to have been so for many a year. My poor child has had a night of some anxiety which, although bearing well at the time, has exacted its penalty at last in a slight attack of fever. It will, I trust, pass over in a few hours; and you—where have you been—they said you had been absent for a day or two?"

"A very short ramble, Sir—one of business rather than pleasure. I learned suddenly—by a newspaper paragraph, too—that a distant relative of my mother's had died in the East, leaving a considerable amount of property to myself; and so, setting out, I arrived at Limerick, intending to sail for Liverpool, when, who should I meet, almost the first person I saw, but my agent, just come in haste from London, to confer with me on the subject. The meeting was so far agreeable, that it saved me a journey I had no fancy for, and also put me in possession of the desired information regarding the property. My agent, speaking of course from imperfect knowledge, calls it a large—what a man like myself would style—a very large fortune."

"I give you joy, with all my heart," cried Corrigan, grasping his hand in both his, and shaking it cordially. "When wealth descends to men who have shown their ability to maintain an honourable station without

it, the chances are greatly in favour of its being nobly and generously employed."

"How I hope that I may not disgrace your theory," said Linton, "for I am not ashamed to assert that I have fulfilled the first condition of the category. With little else but good birth and a fair education, I had to start in the race against others with every aid of fortune, and if I have not reached a more elevated position, I can say that the obstacle lay rather in my own scruples than my incapacity. I declined Parliamentary life because I would not be a nominee; I had a glancing suspicion that my time would come, too, when, without other check upon my motives than the voice of conscience, I should stand in the British Senate a free and independent member. If I have waited patiently for this hour, I hope I have not abused the leisure interval, and that I may bring to the public service something besides the zeal of one who feels the importance of his trust."

"There is no failure with intentions pure and honourable as these," said Corrigan, warmly. "It does not need your talents, Mr. Linton, to ensure success in such a path; one-half of *your* ability, so nobly backed, would reach the goal. And now tell me, if I be not indiscreet in asking some of your plans, what place do you mean to stand for?"

"Our good borough of Derraheeny," said Linton, half smiling. "I am in a measure committed to continue my canvass there, and, indeed, have already entered into securities to keep my pledge. I see these words sound a little mysteriously, but I intend to explain them; only I must ask one favour of you. I hope, before I leave the room, to show that I have, if not a claim upon your generosity, at least a plea to warrant my request. My entreaty is this, that you will never divulge to any one what I shall now tell you."

"Pray, my dear friend, consider for a moment what you are asking. Why make me the depositary of a secret? An old man, whose very years are like fissures in the strong keep,' where mysteries should be imprisoned."

"Could I participate in your reasonings, my dear Sir, there is yet enough in the present instance to make it an exception. This is a matter you ought to know for *your* sake, and to keep secret for *mine*."

"Then you have my promise," said Corrigan, frankly.

"I'll be brief with my explanation," said Linton. "When there was a design, some time back, of my accepting the representation of the borough, Cashel offered me his property of Tubber-beg, on terms which very nearly approached a gift. This—though at the time our relations were those of the closest friendship—I refused; but, as I had made some progress in my canvass of the borough, there was a difficulty in abandoning the position; and so the matter hung, each hoping that the other would suggest some

arrangement that might satisfy both. This fortunate device, however, was not to be discovered, and as, for some time back, our intercourse had become gradually less intimate, the chance of such a solution diminished daily.

"In this way the affair stood, when, a couple of mornings since, I felt it my duty, as one who really felt an interest in him, to remonstrate with Roland on a circumstance which, without any affectation of prudery, would have gravely compromised himself, and, worse still, another person. It was a case—I know not exactly how to touch upon a matter of such delicacy—enough if I say it was one where a persistence in his conduct must have ended in disgrace to him, ruin and misery to another. Poor thing! she is, indeed, to be pitied; and if there be extenuation for such cases, hers is one to claim it. I knew her as Laura Gardiner, the handsomest creature I ever beheld. Well, well, it is a theme I must not linger on. Cashel, so far from receiving my counsel as I hoped, and indeed expected, resented it with anger and rudeness, and even questioned the degree of intimacy on which I presumed to give my unasked advice.

"I am fortunately a man of cool temper, and so I bore this ungenerous return better than most others might; and seeing that it would possibly be the last occasion I should ever have of giving even unwilling counsel, I spoke to him freely and openly. I told him that his mode of living, while derogatory to the hopes conceived of him, was one that must end at last in ruin; that no fortune could stand his losses at play, and the wasteful extravagance of his caprices. I pressed the matter as strongly as I was able, and represented that his habits bore no reference whatever to his income.

"'It is quite true,' said he, with a sneering tone; 'I cannot readily forget I am chargeable with all these wasteful ways you speak of, nor do I feel that I make any the slightest defence of myself, in regard to habits, where my generosity has been as lavish as it has been ill-bestowed.'

"'I wish I knew if I understand you aright?' said I.

"'Your comprehension is of the quickest where there is question of a favour to be received.'

"I did not trust myself with any answer to this speech, which I well knew was a trait of his old buccaneer life. I withdrew, and hastening to his law-agent, Kennyfeck, I at once arranged for the purchase of this small property. The moment for me was propitious. They were in want of ready money, and the treaty was completed the same day. There is the title."

As he spoke, he threw down the parchment deed upon the table, and lay back in his chair, watching with intense delight the expression of sadness and disappointment on Corrigan's features.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the old man at last, "how deceived I have been in him!"

"I confess that is what wounds me most in the whole transaction," said Linton, with a mock emotion in his manner. "One is well accustomed through life to meet sordid motives in mere men of the world, and who deem their low-born subtilty cleverness; but to find a young fellow, beginning life with an ample fortune and a fair position, surrounded by all the blandishments that wealth charms up——"

"Hold!" cried Corrigan, laying his hand on Linton's arm; "I cannot bear this. It is not at my age, Sir, that disappointments like these can be borne easily. I have too short a time before me here to hope to recover from such shocks."

"I would not willingly give you pain, my dear Sir; nor, indeed, is this the topic on which I am most anxious to address you. Another and a very different interest led me hither this morning; and, although I have thought long and maturely on the subject, I am as far as ever from knowing how to approach it. My own unworthiness to what I aspire recoils upon me at every instant, and nothing but the indulgent kindness with which you have always regarded me could give me courage. Forgive me this prolixity; I am like one who fears to plunge, lest he should never rise again."

"If my estimate of you be correct," said the old man, laying his hand upon Linton's, "the goal must needs be high to which you dare not aspire."

"It is indeed so!" cried Linton, as if carried away by an irresistible emotion. "To me it means station, hope, worldly success, happiness,—ay, life itself. I cannot longer tamper with your feelings, nor my own. The ambition of which I speak, is to be your son; not alone in the affectionate love which already I bear you, but by the closest and dearest ties, to be bound to you in the same chain by which she is, who owns all my heart and all my destiny."

He stopped as if overcome; and Corrigan, compassionating the agitation he seemed to suffer, said,

"Be calm, my dear friend; this takes me by surprise. I was not in any way prepared for such an announcement; nor have I courage to look at its consequences; poor, old, companionless as I should be——"

"Nay, such cruelty was not in my thoughts. It was with far other intentions I became possessed of the property. It was in the glorious hope that it would be our home—yours and mine together; not to render your hearth desolate, but to give it another guest, whose duty would be his title to be there."

"Let me think,—let me reflect on this,—let me separate my own selfish thoughts from the higher ones that should guide me. You have not spoken to my daughter?"

"No, Sir; I deemed the more honourable course to have your sanction; or, if not that, to bury my sorrows in silence for ever."

"There is so much to consider, and I am so weak and infirm, so inadequate to decide. Your proposal is a proud one for any girl, I know it; and we are proud, although poor. Ay, Mr. Linton, poor to very necessity! If her affections were engaged by you, if I saw that your high qualities had made the impression upon her that they have on me, I own this offer would delight me; but can you say this is the case?"

"I hope, Sir, I am not indifferent to Miss Leicester. The humble fortune which has restrained me hitherto, and prevented my prosecuting an attachment to which I felt I had no claim, exists no longer. I am independent in means, as in opinion; and, however conscious of my personal unworthiness in all that regards station and condition, I'm in a position to satisfy you. I only ask your sanction to address Miss Leicester—to know, in fact, that if I should prove acceptable to *her*, that *you* will not look unfavourably upon me."

"This appears most candid and fair on your part; and it is a time when we must both use candour and fairness. Now, Mr. Linton, there are circumstances which at this moment involve me in considerable difficulty; I cannot enter into them just yet; but they may offer grave obstacles to what you propose. I will, therefore, beg of you not to press me for my answer. I see this delay is displeasing——"

"Nay, Sir, I am ready to yield to anything you suggest; but is it not possible that my assistance and advice might be of service in these difficulties you speak of?"

"There is another point, Mr. Linton—and I know you will think better of me for all my frankness. Are your friends—your family I mean—aware of this step of yours; are you certain of their concurrence in it?"

"I have few relatives living, Sir," said Linton, reddening; "but I can answer for their participation in all that so nearly concerns my happiness."

"This evening, then; come to me this evening, then," said Mr. Corrigan, "and you shall hear my sentiments."

"This is most kind: I can ask for nothing more," said Linton; and with a most affectionate pressure of the old man's hand, departed.

## CHAPTER L.

### POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS.

Be grateful too! you ask, "for what?"
Simply, for that you never got;
And you'll get something yet.

MACHIAVELLI TRAVESTIED.

MR. LINTON, like a large majority of the cunning people in this world, made the mistake of supposing that every one had an "after-thought"—some secret mental reservation in all he said; that, in fact, no one told "the whole truth" on any subject. Now, judging Mr. Corrigan by this rule, he came to the conclusion that the old gentleman had not received his addresses with all the warmth that might be expected;—possibly, in the hope of a more advantageous offer—possibly, because, in his old Irish pride of family, he had got to learn who this Mr. Linton was, what his connexions, and what position they held in the society of their own country.

In this way did Linton read the old man's inquiry as to the "concurrence of his relatives." It was, to his thinking, a mere subtle attempt to ascertain who and what these same relatives were. "A clever stroke in its way," thought Tom, "but I am not to be drawn out of my entrenchment so easily. Still, the theme will linger in his mind, and must be got rid of."

Linton knew well how the influence of rank and title can smooth down difficulties of this kind, and ran over in his mind the names of at least a dozen Peers, any one of whom, in such an emergency, would have owned him for a half-brother, or a cousin, at least.

It was provoking to think how many there were, at that dull season, listless and unemployed, who could, were he only able to summon them, stand sponsors to his rank and condition. Measuring Corrigan by what he had witnessed in other men of small fortune and retired lives, he deemed "a Lord" was all-essential. Linton had seen a great deal of life, and a great deal of that submissive homage so readily conceded to nobility. A Lord, at a wedding, is like a Captain, in a duel. They are the great ingredients which warrant that these events "come off," properly. They place beyond all cavil or question whatever may occur; and they are the recognisances one enters into with the world that he is "spliced" or shot like a gentleman. It is quite true Linton was above this vulgarity; but he was not above the vulgarity of attributing it to another.

The more he reflected on this, the more did he believe it to be the solution of the whole difficulty. "My kingdom for a Lord!" exclaimed he, laughing aloud at the easy gullibility of that world which he had duped so often.

The reader is aware that of the pleasant company of Tubbermore, Lord Kilgoff was the only representative of the Peerage; and to him Linton's thoughts at once resorted, as the last hope in his emergency. Of late his Lordship had been gradually mending: clear intervals broke through the mist of his clouded faculties, and displayed him, for the time, in all his wonted self-importance, irritability, and pertinacity. To catch him in one of these fortunate moments was the object, and so induce him to pay a visit to the cottage.

Could he but succeed in this, none better than the old Peer to play the part assigned to him. The very qualities to make his society intolerable would be, here, the earnest of success. The imperturbable conceit, the pompous distance of his manner, would repel inquiry, and Linton saw that his oracle would not utter one word more than he ought.

"He will not—I dare not ask him—to call me his relative," said he; "but I can easily throw a hazy indistinctness over our intimacy. He can be a friend of 'my poor father'"—Tom laughed at the conceit—"one who knew me from the cradle. With him for a foreground figure, I'll soon paint an imaginary group around him, not one of whom shall be less than a Marquis.

"With Mary this will not succeed. Laura, indeed, might do me good service in that quarter, but I cannot trust her. Were she more skilled in this world's ways, she would gladly aid me—it would be like drawing the game between us; but she is rash, headlong, and passionate. I doubt if even her fears would control her. And, yet, I might work well upon these! I have the will, and the way, both! The event shall decide whether I employ them." With these thoughts passing in his mind he reached the house, and entering unobserved, since they were all at breakfast, repaired to his own room.

He immediately sat down and wrote a few lines to Lord Kilgoff, inquiring with solicitude after his health, and craving the favour of being permitted to wait upon him. This done, he amused himself by inventing a number of little political "gossipries" for the old Peer—those small nothings which form the sweepings of clubs and the whisperings of under-secretaries' offices; the pleasant trifles which every one repeats, but no one believes.

"My Lord will see Mr. Linton whenever he pleases," was the answer of the valet; and Linton lost no time in availing himself of the permission.

"His Lordship is at breakfast?" said he to the servant, as he walked along.

"Yes, Sir."

"And her Ladyship?"

"My Lady breakfasts below stairs, Sir."

"As it ought to be; he is alone," thought Linton, who in his present incertitude of purpose had no desire to meet her.

"If you'll have the goodness to wait a moment, Sir, I'll tell my Lord you are here," said the man, as he ushered Linton into a handsome drawing-room, which various scattered objects denoted to be her Ladyship's.

As Linton looked over the table, where books, drawings, and embroidery were negligently thrown, his eye caught many an object he had known long, long before; and there came over him, ere he knew it, a strange feeling of melancholy. The past rushed vividly to his mind—that time when, sharing with her all his ambitions and his hopes, he had lived in a kind of fairy world. He turned over the leaves of her sketch-book—she had done little of late—an unfinished bit, here and there, was all he found; and he sat gazing at the earlier drawings, every one of which he remembered. There was one of an old pine-tree scathed by lightning, at the top, but spreading out, beneath, into a light and feathery foliage, beneath which they had often sat together. A date in pencil had been written at the foot, but was now erased, leaving only enough to discover where it had been. Linton's breathing grew hurried, and his pale cheek paler, as with his head resting on his hands he sat, bent over this. "I was happier, then," said he, with a sigh that seemed to rise from his very heart—"far happier! But would it have lasted! that is the question. Would mere love have compensated for thwarted ambition, delusive hope, and poverty? How should I have borne continued reverses?"

The door opened, and Lady Kilgoff entered; not seeing him, nor expecting any one in the apartment, she was humming an opera air, when suddenly she perceived him. "Mr. Linton here? This is a surprise indeed!" exclaimed she, as, drawing herself proudly up, she seemed to question the reason of his presence.

"I beg you will forgive an intrusion which was not of my seeking. I came to pay my respects to Lord Kilgoff, and his servant showed me into this chamber until his Lordship should be ready to receive me."

"Won't you be seated, Sir?" said she, with an accent which it would be difficult to say whether it implied an invitation or the opposite.

Few men had more self-possession than Linton, fewer still knew better how to construe a mere accent, look, or a gesture, and yet, he stood now,

uncertain and undecided how to act. Meanwhile Lady Kilgoff, arranging the frame of her embroidery, took her seat near the window.

"Penelope must have worked in Berlin wool, I'm certain," said Linton, as he approached where she sat. "These wonderful tissues seem never to finish."

"In that lies their great merit," replied she, smiling; "it is sometimes useful to have an occupation whose monotony disposes to thought, even when the thoughts themselves are not all pleasurable."

"I should have fancied that monotony would dispose to brooding," said he, slowly.

"Perhaps it may, now and then," said she, carelessly. "Life, like climate, should not be all sunshine;" and then, as if wishing to change the theme, she added, "You have been absent a day or two?"

"Yes; an unexpected piece of fortune has befallen me. I find myself the heir of a considerable property, just as I have reached that point in life when wealth has no charm for me! There was a time when——but, no matter; regrets are half-brother to cowardice."

"We can no more help one than the other, occasionally," said she, with a faint sigh; and both were silent for some time.

"Is not that tulip somewhat too florid?" said he, stooping over her embroidery.

"That tulip is a poppy, Mr. Linton."

"What a natural mistake, after all!" said he. "How many human tulips who, not only look like, but are, downright poppies! Is not this house intolerably stupid?"

"I'm ashamed to own I think it pleasant," said she, smiling.

"You were more fastidious once, if my memory serves me aright," said he, meaningly.

"Perhaps so," said she, carelessly. "I begin to fancy that odd people are more amusing than clever ones; and, certainly, they entertain without an effort, and that is an immense gain."

"Do you think so? I should have supposed the very effort would have claimed some merit, showing that the desire to please had prompted it."

"My Lord will see Mr. Linton at present," said the servant.

Linton nodded, and the man withdrew.

"How long ago is it since you made this sketch?" said he, opening the book, as if accidentally, at the page with the pine-tree.

She turned, and although her bent-down head concealed her features, Linton saw the crimson flush spread over the neck as she answered, "About three years ago."

"Scarcely so much," said he. "If I mistake not, I wrote the date myself beneath it; but it has worn out."

"You will excuse my reminding you, Mr. Linton, that Lord Kilgoff has not regained his habitual patience, and will be very irritable if you defer a pleasure such as a visit from you always affords him."

"Happy conjuncture," said he, smiling, "that can make my presence desired, in one quarter, when my absence is wished for, in another." And with a low, respectful bow, he left the room.

Whatever the object of the hint, Lady Kilgoff had not exaggerated his Lordship's deficiency in the Job-like element, and Linton found him, on entering, interrogating the servant as to whether he "had conveyed his message properly, and what answer he had received."

"That will do. Leave the room," said he. Then turning to Linton, "I have waited twelve minutes, Sir—nearly thirteen—since my servant informed you I would receive you."

"I am exceedingly sorry, my Lord, to have occasioned you even a moment of impatience. I was mentioning to Lady Kilgoff a circumstance of recent good fortune to myself, and I grieve that my egotism should have mastered my sense of propriety."

"Twelve minutes, or thirteen, either, may seem a very unimportant fraction of time to men of mere pleasure, but to those whose weightier cares impose graver thoughts, is a very considerable inroad, Sir."

"I know it, my Lord. I feel it deeply, and I beg you to excuse me."

"Life is too short, at least in its active period, to squander twelve minutes, Mr. Linton; and however you, in *your* station, and with *your* pursuits, may deem otherwise, I would wish to observe that persons in *mine* think differently."

Linton looked a perfect statue of contrition, nor did he utter another word. Perhaps he felt that continuing the discussion would be but an indifferent mode of compensating for the injury already incurred.

"And now, Mr. Linton, I conclude that it was not without a reason you sought an interview at this unusual hour?"

"The old story, my Lord; and as I came to ask a favour, I selected the *petit lever* as the most appropriate hour."

"Indeed! you surprise me much how an individual so much forgotten as Lord Kilgoff can possibly be of service to that most promising gentleman Mr. Linton!"

Linton never heeded the sarcastic discontent of the speech, but went on:

"Yes, my Lord, you find me, as you have so often found me, a suppliant."

"I have nothing to bestow, Sir."

"You can do all that I could ask, or even wish for, my Lord. My ambition is not very unmeasured; my greatest desire is to have the opportunity of frequent intercourse with you, and the benefit of that practical wisdom for which your Lordship's conversation is distinguished at home and abroad."

"My valet is not going to leave me," said the old man, with an insolence of look that tallied with the rude speech.

"My Lord!——"

"Nay, nay, you must not be offended; I was rather jesting on my own barrenness of patronage than upon your proposal."

Linton saw by the slight advantage he had gained that the bold course was the more promising, and continued:

"You will soon have a great deal of business on your hands, my Lord, and so, I will economise your time and your patience. You have not heard, I am aware, that Dollington has been recalled. The mission at Florence is to give away, and I am here to ask for the Secretaryship. I know well that the appointment is a Foreign-office one; but Blackwell, who gives me the present information, says, 'If you have interest with Kilgoff push it now; his recommendation will, I know, be attended to.' He then goes on to say that Dollington is most anxious to know if you would take his house off his hands. He has been furnishing and arranging the interior most expensively, never dreaming of a recal."

"When did this news come?" said Lord Kilgoff, sitting down and wiping his forehead, on which the perspiration now stood, from agitation.

"Yesterday. Blackwell sent a cabinet messenger to me, but with the strictest injunctions to secrecy. In fact, the rumour would call so many suitors in the field, that the Foreign-office would be besieged."

"You can rely upon it, however?"

"Unquestionably. Blackwell writes me that the thing is done. You will receive the offer immediately after the recess."

"You acted very properly, I must say—very properly, indeed, in giving me this early notice of his Majesty's gracious intentions with regard to me; the more, as I shall have time to consider how far my views upon questions of Foreign politics are in agreement with those of the Government."

"Upon that point your Lordship's mind may be at rest. I gather from Blackwell that you will receive the widest discretion. The Secretary of State has named you as *the* man; of course, interference is out of the question."

"Of course it would be, Sir, were I to accept the mission. Dollington's house, I conclude, is a suitable one, and we'll think of it; and as to your

self, Linton, I really am at a loss what to say. Lady Kilgoff—it is best to be candid—is prejudiced against you. She thinks you satirical and sarcastic, as if"—and here he raised his head, and threw forward his chin with most imposing dignity—"as if the person who bore *my* name need fear such qualities anywhere; but besides this, it appears to *me* that your abilities are not diplomatic. You have neither that natural reserve, nor that suave impressiveness 'the line' requires. You are a Club man, and will probably make a very good House of Commons man; but diplomacy, Mr. Linton—diplomacy is a high, I had almost said a sacred, vocation! To all the *prestige* of family and ancient lineage must be added the most insinuating graces of manner. Personal advantages should be combined with a high cultivation, so that the Envoy may worthily mirror forth the Majesty he represents. It would be an inestimable benefit if the Eastern principle of 'caste' were observed in diplomacy, and the office of Ambassador be limited to certain families! Believe me, Sir, you may say of such, '*Nascitur non fit.*'"

As he spoke, his eyes flashed, and his cheek became flushed; the flutter of self-importance gave a fresh impulse to his circulation, and he walked back and forward in a perfect ecstasy of delight.

"Alas, my Lord! you have made me feel too deeply the presumption of my request. I confess, till I had listened to your eloquent exposition, I had formed other and very erroneous ideas upon this subject. I see, now, that I am quite unsuited to the career. The very fact that it becomes your Lordship, is evidence enough how unfitted it would prove to me."

"I will not say, that in Greece, or perhaps with some Republican Government, you might not be very eligible. We'll consider about it."

"No, no, my Lord; I'll content myself with more humble fortunes. I suppose there is always a place for every capacity—and now, to a matter purely personal to myself, and in which I hope I may count upon your kind co-operation. I have thoughts of marriage, my Lord, and as I am a stranger in this country, unconnected with it by kindred or connexion, I would ask of you to give me that sanction and currency which the honour of your Lordship's friendship confers. The lady upon whom I have fixed my choice is without fortune, but of a family which traces back to Royalty, I fancy. This Irish pride of lineage, then, requires that I, upon my side, should not be deficient in such pretensions."

"I am not a Clarencieux, nor Norroy, Sir, to make out your genealogy," said the old Peer, with ineffable disdain.

Linton had more difficulty to control his laughter than his anger at this impertinent absurdity. "I was not thinking of 'the tree,' my Lord, but its last and most insignificant twig, myself; and, remembering how many kind-

nesses I owed you, how uniformly your patronage had befriended me through life, I still reckon upon that feeling to serve me once more."

"Be explicit. What do you ask?" said he, leaning back and looking like a Monarch whose will was half omnipotence.

"What I should like, my Lord, is this—that you would permit me to drive you over some morning to the gentleman's house, where, presenting the family to your Lordship, I might, while enjoying the sanction of your intimacy and friendship, also obtain your opinion upon the merits of one with whom I would link my humble destinies. I have said that the lady has no fortune; but your Lordship has shown the noble example of selecting for far higher and more ennobling qualities than wealth." This was said with a spice of that subdued raillery of which Linton was a master and he saw, with delight, how the old Peer winced under it.

"Very true, Sir; your remark is just, except that the disparity between our conditions does not give the instance the force of example; nor am I certain the experiment will be always successful!" The irritation under which the last words were uttered spread a triumphant joy through Linton's heart, nor dare he trust himself to speak, lest he should reveal it!

"Perhaps a letter, Mr. Linton, would answer your object. It appears to *me* that the condescension of a visit is a step too far in advance. You are aware that, in a day or two, as his Majesty's representative, etiquette would require that I should never make the initiative in acquaintance."

"Pardon my interrupting, my Lord; but that rule will only apply to you at the seat of your mission. Here, you have no other distinction than of being the well-known leader of the Irish Peerage—the great head of an illustrious body, who look up to you for guidance and direction."

"You are right, perhaps, Sir—my station is what you have described it. I trust you have not mentioned to Lady Kilgoff anything of your Foreign-office news?"

"Of course not, my Lord. It will always remain with your discretion, when and how to make the communication."

"It appears to me, Sir, that her Ladyship has admitted many of the inmates here to a degree of intimacy quite inconsistent with their relative stations."

"Her Ladyship's youth and amiability of manner offer great temptations to the inroads of obtrusiveness," said Linton, with the air of one thinking aloud.

"I disagree with you, Sir, entirely. I was young myself, Sir, and, I am told, not quite destitute of those attractions you speak of; but I am not aware that any one ever took a liberty with *me!* This must be looked to. And now, your affair? When is it to come off? Your marriage, I mean?"

"That is by no means so certain, my Lord," said Linton, who smiled in spite of himself at the careless tone in which his Lordship treated so very humble an event. "I may reckon on your Lordship's assistance, however?"

Lord Kilgoff waved his hand in token of acquiescence, and Linton took a formal leave, almost bursting with laughter at the ridiculous conceit he had himself contributed to create.

"Ay," muttered he, as he descended the stairs, "as a democrat, an out-and-out democrat, I say, 'Long live an Hereditary Peerage!' I know nothing can equal it, in making the untitled classes the rulers."

## CHAPTER LI.

### A WET DAY—THE FALSE SIGNAL.

> So cunning, like the doubling of the hare,
> Oft turns upon itself.
>
> BELL.

It was a rainy day—one of those downright pelting, pouring, swooping wet days which Ireland is accustomed to, for nearly one-half of every year. An out-of-door occupation was impossible; the most fidgety could only get as far as the stables, to smoke a cigar and "chaff" horse-talk with the grooms; while the more resigned wandered from room to room, and place to place, in that restlessness that defies common philosophy to subdue.

A wet day in a country-house is always a severe trial. Sociability will not be coerced, and the greater the necessity for mutual assistance, the less is the disposition to render it; besides, they who habitually contribute least to the enjoyment of their fellows, have always great resources of annoyance at such periods—as the most insignificant instrument in the orchestra can, at any moment, destroy the harmony of the band.

Scarcely was breakfast over in Tubbermore, than the guests were scattered in various directions, it was difficult to say where. Now and then, some one would peep into the drawing-room or the library, and, as if not seeing "the right man," shut the door noiselessly, and depart. Of the younger men, many were sleeping off the debauch of the previous evening. Downie Meek, who had a theory upon the subject, always kept his bed while it rained. Sir Andrew had, unfortunately, mistaken a lotion containing laudanum for some concoction of bitters, and was obliged to be kept ster-

nally walking up and down stairs, along corridors and passages, lest he should drop asleep; his man, Flint, accompanying him with "the wakeful announcement" of "Hae a care, Sir Andrew, here's my Leddy," an antidote to the narcotic worth all the Pharmacopœia contained.

Lady Janet was meanwhile deep in the formation of a stomachic, which, judging from the maid's face as she tasted it, must needs have been of the pungent order. Mrs. White was letter-writing. Howle was sketching heads of the company, under the title of "Beauties of Ireland," for a weekly newspaper. Frobisher was instructing Miss Meek in the science of making knee-caps for one of his horses; and so with the remainder, a few only were to be seen below stairs; of these the "Chief" was fast asleep with the *Quarterly* on his knee, and a stray subaltern or two sat conning over the "Army List," and gazing in stupid wonder at their own names in print! And now we come to the Kennyfecks, at whose door a servant stands knocking for the second or third time. "Come in" is heard, and he enters.

The blinds are drawn, which adding to the gloom of the day, the vast apartment is in semi-darkness, and it is some time before you can descry the figures. On a sofa sits Mrs. Kennyfeck in a kind of travelling-dress, with her bonnet beside her; fragments of ribbons and stray articles of dress litter the sofa and the table, several trunks are strewn about, and a maid and a man are performing a *pas de deux* on an "imperial," which, in its efforts to close at the lock, is giving way simultaneously at the hinges. Miss Kennyfeck stands at the chimney burning notes and letters, of which, as she glances from time to time, her features betray the tenor; and lastly, Olivia is lying on a sofa, her face concealed between her hands, and only the quick palpitation of her bosom showing that her agitation is not lulled in slumber.

"What does he say? I can't hear him with all that stamping," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; and her voice was not of the dulcet order.

"He says the post-horses have come, Mamma; and wishes to know when he's to come round with the carriage."

"When I give orders for it; not till then," said she, imperiously; and the man, abashed in such a presence, departed.

"There, Pearse, leave it so; I cannot bear that noise any longer. Frances, you needn't wait; I'll send for you if I want you;" and the servants withdrew.

"He's at least two hours away, now," said she, addressing her eldest daughter.

"Very nearly. It wanted only a few minutes to eleven when Mr. Cashel sent for him."

"I hope, Caroline, that he will remember what is due, not to himself—I cannot say that—but to *me*, on this occasion. It is impossible that Cashel

can avoid the acknowledgment of his attentions; nothing but your father's incompetence could permit of his escape."

"It's too late, Mamma—altogether too late. When Aunt Fanny——"

"Don't speak of her—don't even mention her name in my presence," cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an accent of bitter anguish.

"I was merely going to observe, Mamma, that her conduct has involved us in such ridicule, that reparation of the mischief is out of the question."

"I wish we were away; I cannot bear to stay another day here," said Olivia, with a deep sigh.

"If Aunt——"

"Don't call her your Aunt, Caroline; I forbid it; she is no sister of mine; she has been the evil genius of our family all her life long. But for her and her wiles I had never been married to your father! Just fancy what a position you might have had now, but for that cruel mishap."

The problem, to judge from Miss Kennyfeck's face, seemed difficult to solve; but she prudently held her peace.

"You may rest assured they know it all below stairs. That odious Lady Janet has told it in every dressing-room already."

"And Linton, Mamma," said Caroline, whose sisterly feelings were merged in most impartial justice—"only fancy Linton imitating Aunt Fanny's benediction with uplifted hands and eyes. I almost think I see him before me, and hear the insolent shouts of laughter on every side."

"Give me the aromatic vinegar!" cried Mrs. Kennyfeck, with an accent like suffocation.

"I think there's some one at the door. Come in," cried Miss Kennyfeck; and a very smartly dressed groom entered with a note.

"Is there any answer to this?" said Mrs. Kennyfeck, listlessly, who thought it one of the habitual invitations to some excursion in a carriage or on horseback.

"Yes, my Lady," said the servant, bowing.

The title sounded pleasantly, and Mrs. K.'s features relaxed as she broke the seal.

Ah, Mrs. Kennyfeck, indolently and carelessly as you hold that small epistle in your fingers, it cost him who wrote it many a puzzling thought, and many a fair sheet of foolscap. Critics assure us that style is no criterion of the labour of composition, and that Johnson's rounded periods ran flippantly off the pen, while the seemingly careless sentences of Rousseau cost days and nights of toil. The note was from Sir Harvey Upton, and neither by its caligraphy nor grammar shed lustre on the literary genius of his corps. It went thus:

"My Dear Madam,

"The beauty and fascinations of your daughters—but more especially of the second—have conspired to inspire me with sentiments of respectful admiration, which may speedily become something warmer should I obtain the gratifying sensation of your approbation.

"Family, fortune, and future expectations, will, I fancy, be found 'all right.'

"Part of the estate entailed on the baronetcy; encumbrances, a trifle.

"I am, waiting your reply, dear Madam,

"Very respectfully yours,

"Harvey Upton,

"—— Hussars."

"Shall we write, Cary?" whispered Mrs. Kennyfeck, in the very faintest of tones.

"Better not, Mamma; a verbal 'happy to see Sir Harvey,' safer," was the answer.

Mrs. Kennyfeck yielded to the sager counsel, and the servant departed with the message.

"We may leave the matter entirely with Livy, Mamma," said her sister, half sarcastically; "I opine that innocence, upon the present occasion, will carry the day."

"I am glad of it," said Mrs. Kennyfeck; "I am fatigued and out of spirits: I'd rather not receive visitors."

"A white frock and a little sentiment—a sprig of jessamine and a bit of poetry!" said Miss K., as she arranged her hair at the glass; only don't overdo it, Livy."

"I'd much rather you'd not go!" said Olivia, languidly.

"Of course, my dear; we are perfectly aware of that, but we have our duties also. Mamma must take care that Aunt Fanny does not 'give you away' before you're asked for; and I must see what the result of Papa's interview with Cashel may be, lest you should make a bad market while a good bid is being offered."

"Clever creature!" murmured Mrs. Kennyfeck, as she rose to leave the room.

"It will seem so odd, Mamma, that I'm to receive him, alone!"

"Not at all, Livy; we are packing up to go off: there are the trunks and cap-cases all strewn about. You can be engaged with Frances, and send her to summon us when Sir Harvey comes," said Miss Kennyfeck.

"Just so, my dear; and then you'll entreat of him to sit down—all as it

you had heard nothing of his note; you'll be quite lively and natural in your manner."

"Ah, Mamma, remember what Talleyrand said to the Emperor: 'Give me the instructions, Sire, but leave the knavery to myself.' My sweet sister is quite diplomatic enough to re-echo it."

Livy looked reproachfully at her, but said nothing.

"If I discover, my dear, that the high prize is on your ticket, I'll wear a handkerchief round my neck. Without you see this emblem, don't discard your Baronet."

"Mamma, is this quite fair?" said Olivia. "Cary speaks as if my heart had no possible concern in the matter."

"Quite the reverse, my dear; but bear in mind that you have only one heart, and it would not be altogether discreet to give it away to two parties. Cary is always right, my love, in morals as in everything else!"

"And how am I to behave, Mamma," said Olivia, with more courage than before, "if I am neither to refuse nor accept Sir Harvey's proposals?"

"Did you never flirt, Livy dearest? Doesn't every partner with whom you dance twice of the same evening make advances that are neither repelled nor received? The silliest boarding-school miss that ever blushed before her Italian teacher knows how to treat such difficulties, if they deserve the name. But we are delaying too long. Mamma! to your post, while I, in the library, establish a strict blockade over Papa."

With these words Miss Kennyfeck waved her hand affectedly in adieu and led her mother from the room; while Olivia, after a second's pause, arose and arrayed more smoothly the silky tresses of her hair before the glass.

We have once already, in this veracious narrative, been ungallant enough to peep at this young lady, and coolly watch her strategy before the enemy. We will not repeat the offence, nor linger to mark how, as she walked the room, she stopped from time to time before the mirror to gaze on charms which expectancy had already heightened; in fact, we will quit the chamber with Mrs. Kennyfeck and her elder daughter, and as the choice is permitted which to follow, we select the latter.

"Here's Miss Kennyfeck, by Jove!" cried Jennings, as she crossed the hall. "We have all been dying to see you; pray come here and give us your counsel." And he led her into a small drawing-room, where, around a table covered with prints and coloured drawings of costume, a considerable number of the guests were assembled.

"For mercy sake, nothing out of the 'Waverley Novels!'" said the blonde lady. "I am wearied of seeing the Jewess Rebecca wherever I go."

"Well, I'll be Diana Vernon, I know that," said Miss Meek; "you may all choose how you please."

"But you can't be, my love, if we have the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'" said Mrs. White.

"Why can't I, if Charley takes Osbaldiston?" said she.

"Because they are not characters of the piece."

"Nobody cares for character in a masquerade!" said Linton.

"Or if they have any, they put a mask over it," said Lady Janet.

"I vote that we are all Tyrolese peasanths," lisped the fat and dumpy Mrs. Malone. "It's a most picthuresque costhume."

"What will you be, Sir Andrew?" cried another, as the old General passed the door in a dog-trot, with Flint behind him.

"By me saul! I thenk I'll be 'the Wanderin' Jew!'" cried he, wiping the perspiration off his forehead.

"You hear that, Lady Janet?" said Linton, roguishly. "Sir Andrew intends to live for ever."

"So that I don't, Sir, I can't complain," said she, with a tartness quite electric.

"I incline to leave the choice of each free," said Miss Kennyfeck, as she tossed over the drawings. "When you select a story, there are always a certain number of characters nobody likes to take."

"I'll be Henri Quatre," said a Infantry Captain. "I wish you'd be Gabrielle, Miss Kennyfeck?"

"Thanks; but I've a fancy for that Cephalonian costume."

"Egad! you can always pick up a 'Greek' or two, here, to keep you company," said a Hussar; but no one joined his laugh.

"I'll be Don Belianis!" said a tall, melancholy Subaltern.

"What were you at Bellingden's last year, Fillymore?"

"I went as 'Chiffney;' but they turned me out. The whole was mediæval and they said I was all wrong."

"Try that turban, my dear Miss Kennyfeck," said Mrs. White, who, suspecting the young lady wore false ringlets, made a vigorous effort to expose the cheat.

"By Jove! how becoming!" exclaimed Jennings. "Now, put on the mantle—not over the right shoulder, but so—crossed a little."

"You ought to have this scarf round your neck," said another; "blue and gold have such an excellent effect."

"I vote for your wearing that," said the Hussar, quite smitten with her beauty. "What do they call the dress?"

"Costume of Leopoldine of Eschingen, who defended the 'Irongate' against the Turks, in 1662."

"Where was that?" asked one.

"In somebody's avenue, I suppose," lisped out the tall Sub-lieutenant.

"No, no; it's on some river or other. There's a cataract they call the Irongate—I forget where."

"The Lethe, perhaps," said Miss Kennyfeck, slyly.

"Is not that a pace!—by Jove! Cashel's in a hurry. This way," said Jennings; and they all rushed to the window in time to see Roland flit past at a full gallop.

Miss Kennyfeck did not wait for more; but, throwing off the turban and mantle, hastened out to catch her father, who, at the same instant, was issuing from the library.

"Now, Pa," said she, slipping her arm within his, "how is it to be? Pray, now, don't affect the mysterious, but say at once—has he proposed?"

"Who? has who proposed?"

"Mr. Cashel, of course. How could I mean any other?"

"For you, my dear?" said he, for once venturing upon a bit of raillery.

"Pshaw, Pa; for Olivia!"

"Nothing of the kind, my dear. Such a subject has never been alluded to between us."

"Poor thing! she has been badly treated then, that's all! It would, however, have saved us all a world of misconception if you had only said so at first; you must own that."

"But you forget, Miss Kennyfeck, that I never supposed you entertained this impression. Mr. Cashel's conversation with me related exclusively to the affairs of his property."

"Poor Livy!" said Miss Kennyfeck, letting go his arm and ascending the stairs. As Miss Kennyfeck drew near the door of the drawing-room, she began to sing sufficiently loud to be heard by those within, and thus, judiciously heralding her approach, she opened the door and entered. Sir Harvey had been standing beside the chimney-piece with Olivia, but turned hastily round, his countenance exhibiting that state of mingled doubt, fear, and satisfaction, which vouched for the cleverness of the young lady's tactics. Nothing, in truth, could have been more adroit than her management; performing a feat which among naval men is known as "backing and filling," she succeeded in manœuvring for nigh an hour, without ever advancing or retiring. We should be unwilling to deny our reader the value of a lesson, did we not feel how the fairer portion of our audience would weary over a recital, in every detail of which they could instruct our ignorance.

The late Lord Londonderry was famed for being able to occupy "the House" for any given time without ever communicating a fact, raising a question, solving a difficulty, or, what is harder than all, committing *himself*.

But how humbly does this dexterity appear beside the young-lady-like tact, that, opposed by all the importunity of a lover, can play the game in such wise, that after fifty-odd minutes the "pieces" should stand upon the board precisely as they did at the beginning!

"How do you, Sir Harvey? Why are you not on that Committee of Costume in the little drawing-room, where the great question at issue is between the time of the Crusades and the Swell Mob?"

"I have been far more agreeably occupied, in a manner that my feelings"—(here Olivia looked disappointed)—"my heart, I mean," said he—(and the young lady looked dignified)—"my feelings and my heart, too," resumed he, horribly puzzled which tack to sail upon, "assure me must nearly concern my future happiness."

"How pleasant!" said Cary, laughingly, as if she accepted the speech as some high-flown compliment; "you are so fortunate to know what to do on a dreary wet day like this."

Olivia, whose eyes were bent upon her sister, changed colour more than once. "The signal was flying"—"stop firing," just at the moment when the enemy had all but "struck;" in less figurative phrase, Miss Kennyfeck's throat was encircled by the scarf which she had forgotten to lay aside on leaving the drawing-room.

The object was too remarkable to escape notice, and Olivia's face grew scarlet as she thought of her triumph. Miss Kennyfeck saw this, but attributed the agitation to anything but its true cause.

"I'm in search of Mamma," said she, and with a very peculiar glance at Olivia, left the room.

Sir Harvey's visit lasted full twenty minutes longer, and although no record has been preserved of what passed on the occasion, they who met him descending the stairs all agreed in describing his appearance as most gloomy and despondent. As for Olivia, she saw the door close after him with a something very like sorrow. There was no love in the case, nor anything within a day's journey of it; but he was good-looking, fashionable, well-mannered, and mustachioed. She would have been "My Lady," too; and though this is but a "brevet nobility" after all, it has all "the sound of the true metal." She thought over all these things; and she thought, besides, how very sad he looked when she said "No;" and, how much sadder, when asking the usual question about "Time, and proved devotion, and all that sort of thing," she said "No" again; and how, saddest of all, when she made the stereotyped little speech about "sisterly affection, and seeing him happy with another!" Oh dear! oh dear! is it not very wearisome and depressing to think that chess can have some hundred thousand combinations, and love-making but its two or three "gambits"—the "fool's-mate"

the chief of them? We have said she was sorry for what had occurred; but she consoled herself by remembering, it was not her fault that Sir Harvey was not as rich as Cashel, and, nephew to a live uncle!

As Sir Harvey's "Lady"—Heaven forgive me, I had almost written "Wife"—she would have been the envy of a very large circle of her Dublin acquaintance; and then she knew that these Dragoon people have a way of making their money go so much further than civilians; and in all that regards horses, equipage, and outward show, the smartest "mufti" is a seedy affair beside the frogs of the new regulation pelisse! She actually began to feel misgivings about her choice.

A high drag at the Howth races, a crowd of whiskered fellows of "ours," and the band of the regiment in Merrion-square, came home to her "dear Dublin" imagination with irresistible fascination. In her mind's eye, she had already cut the "Bar," and been coldly distant with the Infantry. It was a little reverie of small triumphs, but the sum of them mounted up to something considerable.

"Is he gone, Livy?" said Cary, as, entering noiselessly, she stole behind her sister's chair.

"Yes, dear, he is gone!" said she, sighing slightly.

"My poor forlorn damsel, don't take his absence so much to heart! "You're certain to see him at dinner!"

"He said he'd leave this afternoon," said she, gravely; "that he couldn't bear to meet me after what had passed."

"And what has passed, child?"

"You know, of course, Cary; I refused him!"

"Refused him!—refused him!—what possessed you to do so?"

"This!" said Olivia, gasping with terror at the unknown danger; and she caught hold of the fringe of her sister's scarf.

Miss Kennyfeck started, and put her hand to her neck, and suddenly letting it fall again, she leaned against the wall for support.

"This was a mistake, Livy," said she, in a voice barely above a whisper; "I was trying on some costumes below stairs, and they tied this round my neck, where I utterly forgot it."

"And there is nothing——" She could not go on, but hanging her head, burst into tears.

"My poor dear Livy, don't give way so; the fault, I know, was all mine. Let me try if I cannot repair it. Have you positively refused him?"

She nodded, but could not speak.

"Did you say that there was no hope—that your sentiments could never change?"

"I did."

"Come, that's not so bad; men never believe that. You didn't say that your affections were engaged?"

"No!"

"There's a dear child," said she, kissing her neck; "I knew you'd not be guilty of such folly. And how did you part, Livy—coldly, or in affectionate sorrow?"

"Coldly; we did not shake hands."

"That's right; all as it ought to be. It is a sad blunder, but I hope not irreparable. Cheer up, child; depend upon it *my* scarf is not so fatal as Aunt Fanny's blessing."

"Ah, then, my dear, I don't see much difference in the end," said that redoubtable lady herself, who issued from a small conservatory off the drawing-room, where she had lain in wait for the last half hour. "I heard it, my dears, and a nice hash you made of it between you, with your signals and telescopes"—we believe she meant telegraphs—"you threw out the dirty water, now, in earnest!" And so saying, she proceeded to disentangle herself from a prickly creeper, which had a most pertinacious hold of what Linton called her "scalp-lock."

"Aunt Fanny's blessing indeed!" said she, for her temper knew no bounds when she saw the enemy silenced. "'Tis little harm that would have done, if ye didn't take to screaming about it; as if any man could bear that! You drove him away, my dear, just the way your own mother did poor Major Cohlhayne—with hard crying—till he said 'he'd as soon go to a wake as take tay in the house.' And sure enough she had to take up with your poor father, after! Just so. I never knew luck come of signals and signs. When the good thing's before you, help yourself. My poor father used to say, 'Don't pass "the spirits" because there's claret at the head of the table; who knows if it'll ever come down to you?' And there you are, now! and glad enough you'd be to take that curate I saw in Dublin with the smooth face! this minute. I don't blame you, as much as your poor foolish mother. She has you, as she reared you. Bad luck to you for a plant!" cried she as the ingenious creeper insinuated itself among the meshes of her Limerick lace collar. "Cary, just take this out for me;" but Cary was gone, and her sister with her. Nor did Aunt Fanny know how long her eloquence had been purely soliloquy.

She looked around her for a moment at the deserted battle-field, and then slowly retired.

## CHAPTER LII.

THE SHADOW IN THE MIRROR.

"No is the feminine of "Yes!"
HUNGARIAN PROVERB.

BAD as the weather is—and certainly even in Ireland a more drenching, driving-down, pouring rain never fell—we must ask of our readers to follow Cashel, who at a slapping gallop rode on, over grass and tillage, now, careering lightly over the smooth sward, now, sweltering along heavily through deep ground, regardless of the pelting storm, and scarcely noticing the strong fences which, at every instant, tried the stride and strength of his noble horse.

If his speed was headlong, his seat was easy, and his hand as steady as if lounging along some public promenade; his features, however, were flushed, partly from the beating rain, but more from a feverish excitement that showed itself in his flashing eye and closely compressed lip. More than once, in crossing a difficult leap, his horse nearly fell, and although half on the ground, and only recovering by a scramble, he seemed not to heed the accident. At last he arrived at the tall oak paling which fenced the grounds of the cottage, and where it was his wont to halt and fasten his horse. Now, however, he rode fiercely at it, clearing the high leap with a tremendous spring, and alighting on the trimly-kept grass-plat before the door.

A slight faint shriek was heard as the horse dashed past the window, and pale with terror, Mary Leicester stood in the porch.

Cashel had meanwhile dismounted, and given his horse to the old gardener.

"Not hurt, Mr. Cashel?" said she, trying to seem composed, while she trembled in every limb.

"Not in the least. I never intended to have alarmed you, however."

"Then it was no run-away?" said she, essaying a smile.

"I'm ashamed to say I have not that excuse for so rudely trampling over your neat sward. Will Mr. Corrigan forgive me?"

"Of course he will, if he ever ever knows that he has anything to forgive; but it so happens, that he has gone into the village to-day—an excursion he has not made for nigh a year. He wished to consult our

friend the Doctor on some matter of importance, and I half suspect he may have stayed to share his dinner."

As Miss Leicester continued to make this explanation, they had reached the drawing-room, which, to Cashel's amazement, exhibited tokens of intended departure. Patches here and there on the walls showed where pictures had stood. The bookshelves were empty, the tables displayed none of those little trifling objects which denote daily life and its occupations, and his eye wandered over the sad-looking scene till it came back to her, as she stood reading his glances, and seeming to re-echo the sentiment they conveyed.

"All this would seem to speak of leave-taking," said Cashel, in a voice that agitation made thick and guttural.

"It is so," said she, with a sigh; "we are going away."

"Going away!" Simple as the words are, we have no sadder sounds in our language. They have the sorrowful cadence that bespeaks desertion. They ring through the heart like a knell over long-past happiness. They are the requiem over "friends no more," and of times that never can come back again.

"Going away!" How dreary does it sound; as if life had no fixed destination in future, but that we were to drift over its bleak ocean, the "waifs" of what we once had been.

"Going away!" cried Cashel; "but surely you have not heard——" He stopped himself; another word, and his secret had been revealed—the secret he had so imperatively enjoined Tiernay to keep; for it was his intention to have left Ireland for ever ere Mr. Corrigan should have learned the debt of gratitude he owed him. It is true, indeed, that one night of sleepless reflection had suggested another counsel, but had not altered his desire that the mystery should be preserved.

He was confused, therefore, at the peril he had so narrowly escaped, and for a moment was silent; at length he resumed, in a tone of assumed ease:

"'Going away!' sounds to one like me, who have lived a life of wandering, so like pleasure, that I always associate it with new scenes of enjoyment; I think all the sorrow is reserved for those who remain behind—the deserted."

"So it may," said she, "with those who, like yourself, have roamed the world in the excitement of ardent youth, glorying in enterprise, thirsting for adventure; but there are others, ourselves, for instance, whose humble fortunes have linked them with one class of scenes and objects till they have grown part of our very natures; so that we only know the world as it is associated with things familiar to daily use. There are, doubtless, plants of more gorgeous foliage and fairer flowers in other countries, but *we* shall

never learn to look at them as we do upon these that speak to us of home, of spring and summer, when they gladdened *us*, of autumn and winter, when our culture cared for *them*. There are sunsets more rich and glowing but if we see them, it will be to think of that sinking orb which sent its last rays over that wide river and lit up in a golden glory this little chamber. There's not a charm the fairest clime can own but will have its highest merit in recalling some humble scene that tells of 'home.'"

"I never could leave a spot so dear to me as this were!" cried Cashel, who watched with ecstasy the impassioned beauty of her features.

"Do not say *that*," said she, seriously. "We can all of us do what we ought, however it may try our courage. Yes, I say courage," said she, smiling, "since I fancy it is a property you have a due respect for. If we leave scenes so dear to us as these, it is because we feel it a duty; and a duty fulfilled is a buckler against most sorrows. But we are wandering into a very sad theme—at least, to judge from your grave looks. What news have you of your gay company?"

"I see but little of them," said Cashel, abruptly.

"What a strange host!—and how do they amuse themselves?"

"As they fancy, I believe. I only know I never interfere with them, and they are kind enough to reciprocate the civility; and so we get on admirably."

"I must say this scarcely speaks well for either party," said she, laughing.

"I fear not; but it is true, notwithstanding."

"You have a most accomplished friend, I believe?"

"Linton. Do you mean Linton?"

"Yes. He must be an excellent counsellor in all difficulties."

Cashel did not look as if he concurred in the sentiment, but he said nothing; and Mary, half fearing that she had unwittingly given pain, was silent also. She was the first to speak.

"Do you know, Mr. Cashel, how I passed the morning? You'd scarcely guess. It was in writing a long letter; so long, indeed, that I began to fear, like many efforts of over-zeal, it might defeat itself, and never get read; and that letter was—to *you*."

"To *me!* where is it, then?"

"There!" said she, pointing to some charred leaves beneath the grate. "I see your curiosity, and I have no pretension to trifle with it. But last night, late, Papa dictated to me a long sermon on your account, premising that the impertinence was from one you should never see again, and one who, however indiscreet in his friendship, was assuredly sincere in it.

Were the document in existence, I should probably not have to utter so many apologies; for, on the whole, it was very flattering to you."

"And why is it not so?" cried Cashel, eagerly.

"I cannot tell you why."

"Do you mean that you do not wish to tell, or do not know the reason?"

"I do not know the reason," said she, firmly. "I was ill, slightly ill this morning, and could not breakfast with Papa. It was late when I arose, and he was on the very brink of starting for Dunkeeran; he seemed agitated and excited, and, after a few words of inquiry about my health, he said:

"That letter, Mary, have you written it? Well, burn it. Throw it into the fire, at once."

"I did so; but I cannot conceal from you the deep interest he has taken in your fortunes—a feeling which the dread of offending has possibly sentenced him to cherish in secret. At least, so I read his change of intention."

"I had hoped he knew me better," said Cashel, in whose voice a feeling of disappointment might be traced. "It is the misfortune of men like myself to make the most unfavourable impression, where alone they are anxious for the opposite. Now, it may seem very uncourteous, but I am less than indifferent what the fair company yonder think of me; and yet, I would give much to stand high in Mr. Corrigan's esteem."

"And you do so, believe me," cried she, her eagerness moved by the evident despondency of his manner; "he speaks of you with all the interest of a father."

"Do not say so," cried Cashel, in a voice tremulous with anxiety; "do not say so, if you mean not to encourage hopes I scarcely dare to cherish."

His look and manner, even more than his words, startled her; and she stared at him, uncertain what reply to make.

"I never knew a father, nor have I ever tasted a mother's affection. I have been one of whom Fortune makes a plaything, as if to show how much worldly prosperity can consort with a desolate condition, and a heart for which none have sympathy. I had hoped, however, to attach others to me. I had joined in pursuits that were not mine, to endeavour to render myself companionable. I fell in with habits that were uncongenial, and tastes that I ever disliked; but without success. I might be 'the dupe,' but never 'the friend.' I could have borne much—I did bear much—to win something that resembled cordiality and esteem; but all in vain! When I lived the wild life of a Columbian sailor, I deemed that such men as I now associate with must be the very types of chivalry, and I longed to be of

them, and among them. Still, the reproach lies not at their door. *They*, stepped not out of their sphere to act a part—*I*, did; mine was all the sycophancy of imitation. The miserable cant of fashion formed all my code. But for this, I might have won good men's esteem—but for this, I might have learned what duties attach to fortune and station such as mine; and now I see the only one from whom I hoped to gain the knowledge, about to leave me!"

"This despondency is ill-judging and unfair," said Mary, in a kind tone. "You did, perhaps, choose your friends unwisely, but you judge them unjustly too. *They*, never dreamed of friendship in their intercourse with you; *they*, only thought of that companionship which men of the same age and fortune expect to meet in each other. If less worldly-wise, or more generous than themselves, they deemed that they once had paid for their skill and cleverness; and so should *you*. Remember, that you put a value upon their intimacy which it never laid claim to, and that *they* were less false than were *you* self-deceived."

"Be it so," said Cashel, hastily. "I care little where the delusion began. I meant honestly, and if they played not on the square with me, the fault be theirs; but that is not what I would speak of, nor what brought me here to-day. I came to throw my last stake for happiness." He paused, and took her hand in his. "I came," said he—and his lips trembled as he spoke—"I came, to ask you to be my wife!"

Mary withdrew her hand, which he had scarcely dared to press, and leaned upon the chimney-piece without speaking. It rarely happens that such an announcement is made to a young lady quite unexpectedly; such was, however, the case here: for nothing was she less prepared! Cashel, it is true, had long ceased to be indifferent to her; the evenings of his visits at the cottage were sure to be her very happiest; his absences made dreary blanks. The inartificial traits of his character had at first inspired interest; his generous nature, and his manly leaning to right, had created esteem of him. There were passages of romantic interest in his former life which seemed so well to suit his bold and dashing independence; and there was also an implicit deference, an almost humility, in the obedience he tendered to her grandfather, which spoke much for one whom sudden wealth and prosperity might be supposed to have corrupted. Yet, all this while, had she never thought of what impression she herself was making.

"I have but one duty," said she at last, in a faint whisper.

"Might I not share it with you, Mary?" said he, again taking her hand between his own; "you would not grudge me some part of his affection?"

"Who crossed the window there?" cried she, starting; "did you not see a figure pass?"

"No, I saw no one—I thought of none save you."

"I am too much frightened to speak. I saw some one stop before the window and make a gesture, as if threatening—I saw it in the glass."

Cashel immediately hurried from the room, and passing out, searched through the shrubberies on either side of the cottage, but without success. On examining closely, however, he could detect the trace of recent footsteps on the wet grass, but lost the direction on the gravel-walk; and it was in a frame of mind far from tranquil that he re-entered the room.

"You saw no one?" said she, eagerly.

"Not one."

"Nor any appearance of footsteps?"

"Yes, I did, or fancied I did, detect such before the window; but why should this alarm you, or turn your mind from what we spoke of? Let me once more——"

"Not now—not now, I beg of you; a secret misgiving is over me, and I am not generally a coward; but I have not collectedness to speak to you as I ought. I would not wish to be unkind, nor would I yet deceive you. This cannot be."

"Cannot be, Mary?"

"Do not ask me more now. You are too generous to give pain; spare me, then, the suffering of inflicting it on you. I will tell you my reasons, you shall own them to be sufficient."

"When are we to meet again?" said Roland, as he moved slowly towards the door.

"There it is again!" cried she, in a voice of actual terror; and Cashel opened the window and sprang out; but even the slight delay in unfastening the sash prevented his overtaking the intruder, whoever he might be, while, in the abundance of evergreens about, search was certain to prove fruitless.

"Good-by," said she, endeavouring to smile; "you are too proud and high of spirit, if I read you aright, to return ever to a theme like this."

"I am humble enough to sue it out—a very suppliant," said he, passionately.

"I thought otherwise of you," said she, affecting a look of disappointment.

"Think of me how you will, so that you know I love you," cried he, pressing his lips to her hand; and then, half-maddened by the conflict in his mind, he hastened out, and mounting his horse, rode off; not, indeed, at the mad speed of his coming, but slowly, and with bent-down head.

Let a man be ever so little of a coxcomb, the chances are that he will always explain a refusal of this kind on any ground rather than upon that on

his own unworthiness. It is either a case "of pre-engaged affection," or some secret influence on the score of family and fortune, and even this sophistry lends its balm to wounded self-love. Cashel, unhappily for his peace of mind, had not studied in this school, and went his way in deep despondency. Like many men who indulge but seldom in self-examination, he never knew how much his affections were involved till his proffer of them was refused. Now, for the first time, he felt that; now recognised what store he placed on her esteem, and how naturally he had turned from the wearisome dissipations of his own house to the cheerful happiness of "the cottage." Neither could he divest himself of the thought, that had Mary known him in his early and his only true character, she might not have refused him, and that he owed his failure to that mongrel thing which wealth had made him.

"I never was intended for this kind of life," thought he. "I am driven to absurdities and extravagances to give it any character of interest in my eyes, and then I feel ashamed of such triviality. To live among the rich, a man should be born among them—should have the habits, the tastes, and the traditions. These are to be imbibed from infancy, but not acquired in manhood—at least, I will not begin the study."

He turned homeward, still slowly. The bell was ringing which called the guests to dress for dinner as he reached a large open lawn before the house, and for a moment he halted, muttering to himself, "How would it be, now, were I to turn my horse's head and never re-enter that house? How many are there, of all my 'dear friends,' who would ever ask what befel me?"

Arrived at the door, he passed up-stairs to his dressing-room, upon a table of which he perceived a very small note, sealed with Lady Kilgoff's initials. It was written in pencil, and merely contained one line—"Come over to me, before dinner, for one minute.—L. K."

He had not seen her since the day before, when he had in vain sought to overtake her in the wood; and her absence from the dinner-table had seemed to him in pique at his breach of engagement. Was this an endeavour, then, to revive that strange relationship between them, which took every form save love-making, but was all the more dangerous on that account? Or, was it merely to take up some common-place plan of amusement and pleasure—that mock importance given to trifles which as frequently makes them cease to be trifles?

Half careless as to what the invitation portended, and still pondering over his failure, he reached her door and knocked.

"Come in," said she; and he entered.

Dressed for dinner with unusual taste and splendour, he had never seen her look so beautiful. For some time back she had observed an almost

studied simplicity of dress, rarely wearing an ornament, and distinguishing herself rather by a half Puritanism of style. The sudden change to all the blaze of diamonds and the softening influence of deep folds of lace, gave a brilliancy to her appearance quite magical; nor was Cashel's breeding proof against a stare of amazement and admiration.

A deeper flush on her cheek acknowledged how she felt his confusion, and hastening to relieve it, she said,

"I have but a moment to speak to you. It is almost seven o'clock. You were at 'the cottage' to-day?"

"Yes," said Roland, his cheek growing scarlet as he spoke.

"And, doubtless, your visit had some object of importance. Nay, no confessions. This is not curiosity on my part, but to let you know that you were followed. Scarcely had you left this, when Linton set out also, making a circuit by the wood, but at a speed which must have soon overtaken you. He returned some time before you, at the same speed, and entered by the back gate of the stables. From this window I could see him each time."

"Indeed!" said Roland, remembering the figure Mary had seen before the window.

"You know my opinion of this man already. He never moves without a plan; and a plan, with him, is ever a treachery."

He avoids me strangely; we rarely meet now; never by any chance alone. And even before others there is a forced gaiety in his manner, that all his artifice cannot pass off for real."

"Have you thwarted him in anything?"

"Not that I know of."

"Have you refused him any favour that he sought for?"

"Never."

"Is he your debtor for what he ought, but never means, to pay?"

"Not even that. What I may have given him has been always without any reserve or thought of restitution."

"Are your affections directed towards the same object?"

As she said this, the ease in which she commenced gradually left her, and her cheek grew flushed ere she finished.

"I cannot tell. There are no confidences between us; besides, a very bankrupt in love could not envy my solvency. Mine is a heart that cannot threaten dangerous rivalry."

"You cannot be certain of that!" said she, as if thinking aloud.

Fortunately, Cashel did not hear the words, but stood in deep reverie for some seconds.

"There! the second bell has rung; I must leave you. My Lord comes

down to dinner to-day. It is by his orders that I am thus snowily dressed. Linton has been filling his mind with stories of some Embassy he is to have, and we are already rehearsing 'our Excellencies!' I have but time to say, Be on your guard; Linton is no common enemy; nor does it need an injury to make him one."

"It is very rude of me, I know, to interrupt so interesting a *tête-à-tête*, but Mr. Cashel's cook has feelings also at stake."

These words were spoken by Lord Kilgoff, who, in a tone of no small irritation, now joined them.

"I was speaking of your mission, my Lord."

"Which you forgot, of course, was not to be mentioned—even to so sincere a well-wisher as Mr. Cashel."

"In any case, my Lord, it remains safe in my keeping."

"Very possibly, Sir; but, it is a poor earnest Lady Kilgoff gives of her fitness as the wife of a 'Diplomatist.'"

Cashel gave his arm to Lady Kilgoff without speaking, and his Lordship followed them slowly towards the dining-room. Linton stood at the door as they entered, and his wan features grew flushed as the haughty beauty moved past him with the very coldest of recognitions.

"What an admirable taste is your Lordship's!" said he to the old Peer; "Lady Kilgoff's diamonds are disposed with an elegance that bespeaks the guiding skill of a consummate artist."

"Ha! you perceive it, then!" said he, smiling. "I own to you, the festooning the robe with bouquets of brilliants was a fancy of mine, and has, I think, a very pretty effect."

"Storr told me that he had not one person in his employment could equal your Lordship in the harmonious arrangement of gems. He mentioned a bracelet, if I remember aright, made from your own designs, as the most beautifully chaste ornament he had ever seen."

"You must pronounce for yourself, Sir," said the old Lord, with a smile of elated vanity; and so, taking Linton's arm, he approached where Lady Kilgoff was seated in a group of ladies.

"Will you oblige me, Madam," said he, with a courteous bow, "by showing Mr. Linton your ruby and opal bracelet, which I had the poor merit of designing?"

"I am unfortunate enough not to have it here," replied she, with a confusion which made the blood mount to her temples.

"I am grieved, Madam, it should not enjoy the honour of your preference," said Lord Kilgoff, with an air of pique. "Will you order your maid to fetch it?"

"I've not got it, my Lord," said she, colouring still deeper.

"Not got it, Madam! you do not mean to imply——"

"Only that it is slightly broken—a few stones have fallen out, and I have sent it to be repaired."

"To be repaired, Madam! and without my knowledge. To whom, pray?"

"That man in Dublin; I forget his name."

"Your Ladyship means Leonard, I presume," interposed Linton, with an air of courtesy, while, plainer than any words, his glance said, "My revenge is coming!"

"Leonard!" exclaimed Lord Kilgoff, with a look of horror. "Give Leonard that bracelet! the mould of which I refused to the Princess of Hohenhöffingen, and which I made Storr destroy in my own presence!"

"You perceive, my Lord," cried Lady Janet, "her Ladyship is less exclusive than you are."

"And generous enough to admire what may belong to another," added Linton, but in a tone only audible by Lady Kilgoff.

"We have got a few minutes before dinner, Madam. I must beg you will employ them in writing to Mr. Leonard to return the bracelet at once. Say it was a mistake on your part—an inadvertence—and done without my knowledge. Caution the man, too, about appropriating any portion of the design, and remind him that articles of *vertù* are protected by the act of copyright."

"We had better delay the postboy, my Lord," said Linton; "he starts at seven precisely."

"Do so, Sir."

"Dinner!" cried the butler, flinging wide the folding-doors.

"Could we delay that pleasant summons a few minutes, Mr. Cashel?" said Lord Kilgoff.

"It will not be necessary on my account, Sir; I'll write to-morrow." And this she said with an air of haughty defiance that never failed to subdue the old Peer's petulance; and then, accepting Cashel's arm, moved on without a word.

"Where is it? that's the question!" whispered Mrs. White to Lady Janet.

"Take you two to one it's not at Leonard's," said Frobisher.

"Give you an even fifty Linton knows all about it," replied Upton.

"And ten to two that he'll never tell!" chimed in Miss Meek; and so they took their places at the table.

## CHAPTER LIII.

### THE OLD FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

I could an I would, Sir Harry
OLD PLAY.

WHILE the gay company at Tubbermore dined sumptuously, and enjoyed the luxuries of a splendid table with no other alloy to their pleasure than the *ennui* of people whose fastidiousness has grown into malady, Mr. Corrigan sat in council at the cottage with his ancient ally, the Doctor. There was an appearance of constraint over each—very unusual with men who had been friends from boyhood; and in their long pauses, and short, abrupt sentences, might be read the absence of that confiding spirit which had bound them so many years like brothers.

It may be in the reader's recollection that, while Corrigan was pledged to secrecy by Linton respecting his revelations of Cashel, Tiernay was equally bound by Roland not to divulge any of his plans for the old man's benefit. Perhaps it was the first time in the life of either that such a reserve had been practised. Certainly, it weighed heavily upon both; and more than once they were coming to the fatal resolve to break their vows, and then some sudden thought—some unknown dread of disconcerting the intentions of those who trusted them—would cross their mind, and after a momentary struggle, a half cough, and muttered "Well! well!" they would relapse into silence, each far too occupied by himself to note the other's embarrassment.

It was after a long time and much thought that Corrigan perceived, however pledged to Linton not to speak of Cashel's conduct respecting the cottage, that he was in no wise bound to secrecy regarding the proposal for Mary Leicester's hand; and this was, indeed, the topic on which he was most desirous of the Doctor's counsel.

"I have a secret for you, Tiernay," said the old man, at length; "and it is one which will surprise you. I have had an offer this morning for Mary! Ay; just so. You often told me that nothing but this life of isolation and retirement would have left her with me so long; but the thought of losing her—the tangible, actual dread—never presented itself before this day!"

"Who is it?" said Tiernay, shortly, but not without evident agitation of manner.

One who has never enjoyed much of your favour, Tiernay, and whom I suspect you have judged with less than your habitual fairness."

"I know the man. Linton?"

"It was Linton."

"And he actually made this proposition?" said Tiernay, with an expression of the most unbounded surprise in his features.

"To me, myself, in this room, he made it."

"He asked you what her fortune would be?" said Tiernay, gruffly.

"He did not; he told me of his own. He said, that by a recent event he had become possessed of sufficient property to make him indifferent to the fortune of whoever he might marry. He spoke sensibly and well of his future career, of the plans he had conceived, and the rules he made for his own guidance; he spoke warmly of her with whom he wished to share his fortunes; and lastly, he alluded in kind terms to myself, dependent as I am upon her care, and living as I do upon her affection. In a word, if there was not the ardour of a passionate lover, there was what I augur better from—the sentiments of one who had long reflected on his own position in life, who knew the world well, and could be no mean guide amid its dangers and difficulties."

"Have you told Mary of this?"

"I have not. My answer to Linton was: 'Let me have time to think over this proposal; give me some hours of thought before I even speak to my granddaughter;' and he acceded at once."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Tiernay, rising and pacing the room. "How inadequate are we two old men—removed from intercourse with the world, neither players nor lookers-on at the game of life—to cope with one like him, and see what he purposes to himself by this alliance! As for his affection, as for his power to feel her worth, to estimate the gentle virtues of her spotless nature, I cannot, I will not believe it."

"And for that very reason are you unfit to judge him. Your prejudices, ever against him, are rendered stronger, because you cannot divine motives black enough to suit your theory; you give the benefit of all your doubts against himself."

"I know him to be a gambler in its worst sense. Not one who plays even for the gratification of those alternating vacillations of hope and fear which jaded, worn-out natures resort to as the recompense for blunted emotions and blasted ambitions, but a gambler for gain!—that foul amalgam of the miser and the knave. I've seen him play the sycophant, too, like one who studied long his part, and knew it thoroughly. No, no, Con, it is not one like this must be husband of Mary!"

"I tell you again, Tiernay, you suffer your prejudices to outrun all your

prudence. The very fact that he asks in marriage a portionless girl, without influence from family, and without the advantage of station, should outweigh all your doubts twice told."

"This does but puzzle me — nothing more," said Tiernay, doggedly 'Were it Cashel, that high-hearted, generous youth, who made the offer——"

"I must stop you, Tiernay; you are as much at fault in your over-estimate of *one*, as in your disparagement of the *other*. Cashel is not what you deem him. Ask me not how I know it. I cannot—I dare not tell you it is enough that I do know it, and know it by the evidence of my own eyes."

"Then they have deceived you, that's all," said Tiernay, roughly; "for I tell you, and I speak now of what my own knowledge can sustain, that he is the very soul of generosity—a generosity that would imply recklessness, if not guided by the shrinking delicacy of an almost girlish spirit."

"Tiernay, Tiernay, you are wrong, I say," cried Corrigan, passionately.

"And *I* say it is *you* who are in error," said Tiernay. "It was but this morning I held in my hands——" He stopped, stammered, and was silent.

"Well," cried Corrigan, "go on; not that, indeed, you could convince me against what my eyes have assured, for here, upon this table, I beheld——"

"Out with it, man! Tell what jugglery has been practised on you, for I see you have been duped."

"Hush! here's Mary!" cried Corrigan, who, scarcely able to control himself, now walked the room in great agitation.

"You were talking so loud," said Mary, "that I guessed you were quarrelling about politics, and so I came to make peace."

"We were not, Mary; but Tiernay is in one of his wrong-head humours."

"And your grandfather in the silliest of his foolish ones!" exclaimed Tiernay, as, snatching up his hat, he left the cottage.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### A TETE-A-TETE INTERRUPTED.

Like battle-trumps
The chaos of their tongues did drown reflection.
OSWALD.

It might be thought that in a household so full of contrarieties as Tubbermore, any new plan of pleasure would have met but a meagre success. Here, were the Kilgoffs, upon one side, full of some secret importance, and already speaking of the uncertainty of passing the spring in Ireland. There, were the Kennyfecks, utterly disorganised by intestine troubles—mother, aunt, and daughters at open war, and only of one mind for some few minutes of each day, when they assailed the luckless Kennyfeck as the "author of all evil;" Frobisher, discontented that no handicap could be "got up," to remunerate him for the weariness of his exile; Upton, suffering under the pangs of rejection; Sir Andrew, reduced to a skeleton by the treatment against his unhappy opiate, being condemned, as "Jim" phrased it, to "two heavy sweats without body-clothes, and a drench every day;" Meek grown peevish at the little prospect of making anything of Cashel politically; and Cashel himself hipped and bored by all in turn, and wearied of being the head of a house where the only pleasantry existed in the servants' hall—and they were all rogues and thieves who made it.

It might be easily supposed these were not the ingredients which would amalgamate into any agreeable union, and that even a suggestion to that end would meet but few supporters.

Not so; the very thought of doing "anything" was a relief: each felt, perhaps, his share of shame at the general *ennui*, and longed for whatever gave a chance of repelling it. It was as in certain political conditions in seasons of general stagnation—men are willing even to risk a revolution rather than continue in a state of unpromising monotony.

Lirton, whose own plans required that the others should be full of occupation of one kind or other, was the first to give the impulse, by reminding Miss Meek that her sovereignty had, up to this time, been a dead letter.

"You have positively done nothing," said he, "since your accession. Here we are, all ready to do your bidding, only waiting for the shadow of a wish on your part. There is no obstacle anywhere; pray let us commence a

series of such right royal festivities as shall cause the envy of every other sovereign in Christendom."

"I'm sure I wish for nothing better; but nobody minds me," said she, pouting.

"What shall be the opening, then?" said Linton, taking a sheet of paper, and seating himself, in all form, to write. "A masquerade?"

"By all means! A masquerade!" exclaimed a dozen voices; and at once a large circle gathered round the table where he sat.

"Does the country afford materials for one?" asked Jennings.

"Oh dear, yes!" sighed Meek; "you could gather a great many important people here by a little management."

"I'll tell Macnevin, wha commands at Limerick, to send ye every officer wha isn't under arrest," said Sir Andrew.

A speech received with great favour by various young ladies unknown to the reader.

Every one who knew anything of the three neighbouring counties was at once summoned to form part of a select committee to name those who ought to be invited. The Chief Justice was acquainted with the principal persons, from his having gone circuit; but then, those he mentioned were rarely of the stamp to add lustre or brilliancy to a fancy ball; indeed, as Linton whispered, "The old Judge had either hanged or transported all the pleasant fellows."

The Infantry men from Limerick were familiar with every pretty girl of that famed capital and its environs for some miles round; and as exclusiveness was not to be the rule, a very imposing list was soon drawn up.

Then came the question of receiving so large a party, and each vied with his neighbour in generous sacrifices of accommodation; even Downie vouchsafed to say that the noise would be terrible, "but one ought to submit to anything to give pleasure to his friends."

The theatre should be the ball-room; the two drawing-rooms and the library would offer space for the company to promenade; the buffet stand in the dining-room; and supper be served in the great conservatory, which, with its trellised vines all studded with lights disposed as stars, would have a new and beautiful effect.

Sir Andrew promised two military bands, and unmarried officers *à discrétion*.

Devoted offers of assistance poured in from every side. Foraging parties were "told off," to shoot snipe and woodcocks without ceasing; and Frobisher was to ply with a four-in-hand—of Cashel's horses—to and from Limerick every day, carrying everybody and everything that was wanting.

All the servants of the guests, as well as of the house, were to be attired in a costume which, after some discussion, was decided to be Spanish.

Unlimited facilities were to be at the disposal of all, for whatever they pleased to order. Mrs. White sat down to write to Paris for an envoy of moss-roses and camelias, with a postscript from Upton on the subject of red partridges and *foie gras*.

Jennings dictated a despatch to Mayence for two cases of Steinberger; and Howle took notes of all for a series of papers, which in four different styles were to appear in four periodicals simultaneously.

As each guest was at full liberty to invite some half-dozen friends, there was quite an excitement in comparing lists with each other, and speculations innumerable as to the dress and character they would appear in, for all were mysterious upon that head.

"But whar is Maister Cashel all this time?" said Sir Andrew; "methinks it wud na be vara polite na to hae his opinion upon a' this, syne he must gie the siller for it."

"He's playing chess with Lady Kilgoff in the boudoir," said Jennings.

"Tell Kennyfeck," said Frobisher; "that's quite enough! Cashel calls everything where money enters, business, and hates it, in consequence."

"Oh dear! I'm precisely of his mind, then," sighed Meek, caressing his whiskers.

"Kilgoff will not remain, you'll see," said Upton. "He is not pleased with my Lady's taste for close intimacy."

"The Kennyfecks are going to-morrow or next day," said another.

"So they have been every day this last week; but if some of you gentlemen will only be gallant enough to give a good reason for remaining, they'll not stir." This was spoken by Lady Janet in her tartest of voices, and with a steady stare at Upton, who stroked his moustaches in very palpable confusion. "Yes, Sir Harvey," continued she, "I'm perfectly serious, and Mr. Linton, I perceive, agrees with me."

"As he always does, Lady Janet, when he desires to be in the right," said Linton, bowing.

"Aw—I, aw—I didn't think it was so easy in that quarter, aw!" said Jennings, in a low semi-confidential tone.

"I'll insure you for a fair premium, Jennings, if you have any fancy that way."

"Aw, I don't know—concern looks hazardous—ha, ha, ha!—don't you think so?" But as nobody joined in his laughter, he resumed, in a lower voice, "There's Upton's very spoony indeed about one of them."

"It's the aunt," said Linton; "a very fine woman, too; what the French call a '*beauté sévère*;' but classical, quite classical."

"Confounded old harridan!" muttered Upton between his teeth; "I'd not take her with Rothschild's bank at her disposal."

All this little chit-chat was a thing got up by Linton, while stationing himself in a position to watch Cashel and Lady Kilgoff, who sat, at a chess-table, in an adjoining room. It needed not Linton's eagle glance to perceive that neither was attentive to the game, but that they were engaged in deep and earnest conversation. Lady Kilgoff's back was towards him, but Roland's face he could see clearly, and watch the signs of anger and impatience it displayed.

"A little more noise and confusion here," thought Linton, "and they'll forget that they're not a hundred miles away;" and acting on this, he set about arranging the company in various groups; and while he disposed a circle of very fast-talking old ladies, to discuss rank and privileges, in one corner, he employed some others in devising a character quadrille, over which Mrs. White was to preside; and then, seating a young lady at the piano, one of those determined performers who run a steeple-chase through waltz, polka, and mazurka, for hours uninterruptedly, he saw that he had manufactured a very pretty chaos "off-hand."

While hurrying hither and thither, directing, instructing, and advising every one, he contrived also, and as it were by mere accident, to draw across the doorway of the boudoir the heavy velvet curtain that performed the function of a door. The company were far too busied in their various occupations to remark this; far less was it perceived by Lady Kilgoff or Roland. Nobody knew better than Linton how to perform the part of fly-wheel to that complicated engine called society; he could regulate its pace to whatever speed he pleased; and upon this occasion he pushed the velocity to the utmost; and, by dint of that miraculous magnetism by which men of warm imagination and quick fancy inspire their less susceptible neighbours, he spread the contagion of his own merry humour, and converted the drawing-room into a scene of almost riotous gaiety.

"They want no more leadership now," said he, and slipped from the room and hastened towards the library, where sat Lord Kilgoff, surrounded by folios of Grotius and Puffendorf—less, indeed, for perusal and study, than as if inhaling the spirit of diplomatic craft from their presence.

"Nay, my Lord, this is too much," said he, entering with a smile; "some relaxation is really necessary. Pray come and dissipate a little with us in the drawing-room."

"Don't lose my place, however," said he, smiling far more graciously than his wont. "I was just considering that assertion of Grotius, wherein he lays it down that 'a river is always objectionable as a national boundary.' I dissent completely from the doctrine. A river has all the significance of

a natural frontier. It is the line of demarcation drawn from the commencement of the world between different tracts, and at once suggests separation."

"Very true, my Lord; I see your observation in all its justice. A river, in the natural world, is like the distinguishing symbol of rank in the social, and should ever be a barrier against unwarrantable intrusion."

Lord Kilgoff smiled, tapped his snuff-box, and nodded, as though to say, "Continue." Linton understood the hint in this wise, and went on:

"And yet, my Lord, there is reason to fear that, with individuals as with nations, these demarcations are losing their '*prestige*.' What people call enlightenment and progress, now-a-days, is the mere negation of these principles."

"Every age has thrown some absurd theory to the surface, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff, proudly; "Southcotians, Mormons, and Radicals among the rest. But truth, Sir, has always the ascendancy in the long run. Facts cannot be sneered down; and the Pyrenees and the English Peerage are facts, Mr. Linton, and similar facts, too!"

Linton looked like one who divided himself between rebuke and conviction—submissive, but yet satisfied.

"Give me your arm, Linton; I'm still very far from strong; this place disagrees with me. I fancy the air is rheumatic, and I am impatient to get away; but the fact is, I have been lingering in the hope of receiving some tidings from the Foreign-office, which I had rather would reach me here, than at my own house."

"Precisely, my Lord; the request then has the air—I mean, it shows you have been sought after by the Minister, and solicited to take office when not thinking of the matter yourself."

"Quite so; I open the despatch, as it may be, at the breakfast-table, jocularly observing that it looks official, eh?"

"Exactly, my Lord; you even surmise that it may prove an appointment you have solicited for one of your numerous *protégés*—something in the Colonies, or the 'troop,' without purchase, in the Blues?"

Lord Kilgoff laughed—for him, heartily—at Linton's concurrence in his humour, and went on:

"And when I open it, Linton, and read the contents, eh?"

Here he paused, as if asking what effect his astute friend would ascribe to such pleasant tidings.

"I think I see your Lordship throw the heavy packet from you with a 'Pshaw!' of disappointment; while you mutter to your next neighbour, 'I have been warding off this these two or three last years, but there's no help for it; the King insists upon my taking the mission at Florence!'"

"I must say, Mr. Linton, your conjecture strikes me as strained and unnatural. The appointment to represent my august master at the court of Tuscany might be a worthy object of my ambition. I cannot agree with the view you take of it."

Linton saw that he had "charged too far," and hastened to secure his retreat.

"I spoke, my Lord, rather with reference to your regret at quitting the scenes of your natural influence at home, of withdrawing from this distracted country the high example of your presence, the wisdom of your counsels, the munificence of your charity. These are sad exports at such a time as this!"

Lord Kilgoff sighed—he sighed heavily; he knew Ireland had gone through many trials and afflictions, but the dark future which Linton pictured had never presented itself so full of gloom before. He doubtless felt that, when he left the ship, she would not long survive the breakers; and, sunk in these reveries, he walked along at Linton's side till they gained the picture-gallery, at one extremity of which lay the boudoir we have spoken of.

"Poor things, my Lord!" said Linton, shrugging his shoulders as he passed along, and casting a contemptuous glance at the apocryphal Vandycks and Murillos around, and for whose authenticity he had himself, in nearly every case, been the guarantee.

Lord Kilgoff gave a fleeting look at them, but said nothing; and Linton, to occupy time, went on:

"New men, like our friend here, should never aspire above the Flemish school. Your Cuyps, and Hobbemas, and Vanderveldes are easily understood, and their excellences are soon learned. Even Mieris and Gerard Dow are open to such connoisseurship; but, to feel the calm nobility of a Velasquez, the sublime dignity of a Vandyck, or the glorious intellectuality of a Titian portrait, a man must be a born gentleman, in its most exalted signification. What a perfect taste your collection at Kilgoff displays! All Spanish or Venetian, if I mistake not."

"Are we not like to disturb a *tête-à-tête*, Linton?" said Lord Kilgoff, nudging his friend's arm, and laughing slyly, as he pointed through the large frame of plate-glass that formed a door to the boudoir.

"By Jove!" said Linton, in a low whisper, "and so we were! You are always thoughtful, my Lord!"

"You know the adage, Linton, 'An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper!' Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ah, my Lord! I have heard as much of you. But who can they be?"

"We shall soon see, for it is always better in these cases to incur the

The Chess Players

rudeness of interruption than the meanness of *espionnage;*" and so saying, Lord Kilgoff opened the door and entered. Although in so doing the noise he made might easily have attracted notice, the chess-players, either deep in their preoccupation, or habituated to the uproar of the drawing-room, paid no attention, so that it was only as he exclaimed "Lady Kilgoff!" that both started, and beheld him, as, pale with passion, he stood supporting himself on the back of a chair.

"Pray don't stir, Sir; be seated, I beg," said he, addressing Cashel, in a voice that shook with anger; "my interruption of your game was pure accident."

"No apologies, my Lord; we are both but indifferent players," said Cashel, smiling, but yet very far from at ease.

"Your seclusion at least bespeaks the interest you feel in the game. Mr. Linton and I can vouch——" (Here his Lordship turned to call his witness, but he had left the court, or, more properly speaking, had never entered it.)

"Linton here?" said Lady Kilgoff, in a voice which, though scarce a whisper, was actually thrilling in the intensity of its meaning.

"I hope, Sir, when you have lived somewhat more in the world, you will learn that the first duty of a host is not to compromise a guest."

"I am most willing to be taught by your Lordship's better knowledge; but if I am to benefit by the lesson in the present case, it must be more clearly expressed," said Cashel, calmly.

"As for you, Madam," said Lord Kilgoff, "I cannot compliment you on the progress you have made in acquiring the habits and instincts of 'your order.'"

"My Lord!" exclaimed she; and then, with a countenance wherein rebuke and entreaty were blended, she stopped.

"I am aware, Sir, what *éclat* young gentlemen now-a-days derive from the supposed preference of individuals of exalted rank; and I would hope that your vanity may be most in fault, here."

"My Lord, one word—only one," said Cashel, eagerly; "I am sadly afflicted with the infirmity of hot temper, which never gives way more surely, nor more suddenly, than when accused wrongfully. Such is your Lordship doing at present. I would entreat you not to say, what a very little calm reflection will call upon you to retract."

"This concerns *me*, Sir, most of all," said Lady Kilgoff, rising and drawing herself proudly up. "These unworthy suspicions had never occurred to you, had they not been prompted; but you might have believed that when I sacrificed all I have done, for that rank of which so incessantly you remind me, that I would not rashly hazard the position for which

I paid so dearly.—Let us leave this now, my Lord; Mr. Cashel can scarcely desire a presence that has so ungratefully rewarded his hospitality, and I, at least, shall be spared the mortification of meeting one who has been a witness to such an outrage."

"This is not to end here, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff, in a whisper to Cashel, who, more intent upon the words Lady Kilgoff had just uttered, carelessly answered,

"As you will."

"Good-by, Mr. Cashel," said she, holding out her hand; "I wish I was leaving a better *souvenir* behind me than the memory of this last scene."

"I will never remember it, Madam," said Cashel; "but I would beg that you may not let an incident so trivial, so perfectly devoid of everything like importance, hasten your going. Nothing save malevolence and calumny could suggest any other impression, and I would beseech you not to favour, by such a step as a hasty departure, the malice that scandal-lovers may circulate."

"This is matter for *my* consideration, Sir," said Lord Kilgoff, haughtily; while, drawing Lady Kilgoff's arm within his own, he made a vigorous attempt to move away with dignity.

## CHAPTER LV.

LORD KILGOFF DETERMINES TO "MEET" ROLAND.

Is he not too old for such gambols?—Sir Raymond.

Cashel was in no mood to join his company after such a scene, and hastening up-stairs, he entered his dressing-room. What was his surprise to see that Linton was seated in an easy-chair before the fire, enjoying a cigar and a new novel, with all the cool negligence of his unruffled nature.

"At last!" cried he, as Cashel entered. "I have been waiting here most impatiently to know how you got through it."

"Through what!—how—what do you mean?"

"That affair with Kilgoff. I slipped away when I saw that he *would* enter the boudoir, after having coughed and sneezed like a grampus, in the hope of attracting your attention; but you were so confoundedly engrossed by my Lady's agreeability—so excessively tender——"

"Linton, I must stop you at once. I may barter some of my own self

respect for quietness' sake, and let you talk this way of *me*, but you shall not do so of another."

"Hang it, man, she is an older friend than yourself. I have known her these seven years—as little more than a child."

"Your friendship would seem a costly blessing, if you understand its duties always in this fashion."

"I hope it will admit of a little frankness, at all events," said he, affecting a laugh. "It will be too bad if you both fall out with me for watching over your interests."

"I don't understand you."

"I will be plain enough. I have seen for many a day back what has been going on. I perceived the very commencement of the mischief, when probably neither she nor you dreamed of it; and, resigning all the esteem that years had cemented between us, I spoke to her. Ay, Roland, I told her what would happen. I said, that qualities like yours could not be brought every day into contrast with those of poor Kilgoff without most unhappy comparisons. I explained to her, that if she did form an attachment to you, it could not be one of those passing flirtations that an easy code of fashion admits and sanctions; that you were a fellow whose generous nature could never descend to such heartless levity, and that there was no sacrifice of position and prospect you would hesitate to make for a woman that loved you; and I asked her flatly, would she bring such ruin upon you? The greater fool myself; I ought to have known better. She not only refused to listen to me, but actually resented my attempted kindness by actual injury. I don't want to speak for myself here, so I'll hasten on. It was all but a cut between us, for months before we met here. You may remember, in Dublin, we rarely even spoke to each other; we, who once had been like brother and sister!

"Well, before she was a week here, I saw that the danger I had dreaded so long, was hourly becoming more imminent. *You*, very possibly, had not a serious thought upon the matter, but *she* had actually fallen in love! I suppose you must have played hero, at that shipwreck, in some very chivalrous fashion; however it was, my Lady had lost her heart, precisely at the same time that his Lordship had lost his head—leaving you, I conjecture, in a very awkward dilemma. Seeing there was no time to lose, and resolving to sacrifice myself to save her, I made one more effort. I'll not weary you with a narrative of my eloquence, nor repeat any of the ten-thousand-and-one reasons I gave, for her shunning your society, and, if need were, leaving your house. The whole ended as I ought to have foreseen it would—in an open breach between us; she, candidly avowing that she would be my deadly enemy through life, and even procure a personal rup-

sure between you and me, if pushed to it, by my 'impertinent importunity,' so she called it. I own to you I was completely dumfounded by this. I knew that she had courage for anything, and that, if she did care for a man, there would be a recklessness in the course she would follow that would defy guidance or direction, and so, I abstained from any further interference; and, as you may have remarked yourself, I actually estranged myself from you."

"I did remark that," said Cashel, gravely.

"Well, to-night, when by mere accident Kilgoff and I had sauntered into the gallery and came upon you in the boudoir, I own frankly I was not sorry for it; unpleasant as such scenes are, they are better—a hundred thousand times better—than the sad consequences they anticipate; and even should anything take place personally, I'd rather see you stand Kilgoff's fire at 'twelve paces,' than be exposed to the flash of my Lady's eye at 'one.'"

"Your friendly zeal," said Cashel, with a very peculiar emphasis on the words, "would seem to have got the upper hand of your habitually sharp perception; there was nothing to fear in any part of my intimacy with Lady Kilgoff. I have been but too short a time conversant with fashionable life to forget more vulgar habits, and, among them, that which forbids a man to pay his addresses to the wife of another. I need not vindicate her Ladyship; that she has taken a warm, I shame not to say an affectionate, interest in my fortunes, may have been imprudent. I know not what your code admits of or rejects, but, her kindness demands all my gratitude, and, if need be, the defence that a man of honour should always be ready to offer for the cause of truth."

"Don't you perceive, Cashel, that all you are saying only proves what I have been asserting—that, while you are actually ignorant of your danger, the peril is but the greater? I repeat it to you, however intact *your* heart may be, *hers* is in your keeping. I know this; nay, I say it advisedly—don't shake your head and look so confident—I repeat it, I know this to be the case."

"You *know* it?" said Cashel, as though Linton's words had startled his convictions.

"I *know* it, and I'll prove it, but upon one condition, your word of honour as to secrecy." Cashel nodded, and Linton went on. "Some short time back, some one, under the shelter of the anonymous, wrote her a letter, stating that they had long watched her intimacy with you—grieving over it, and regretting that she should have yielded any portion of her affection to one, whose whole life had been a series of deceptions; that your perjuries in Love's Court were undeniable, and that you were actually married, legally and regularly married, to a young Spanish girl."

"Was this told her?" said Cashel, gasping for breath.

"Yes, the very name was given—Maritaña, if I mistake not.—Is there such a name?"

Cashel bent his head slightly in assent.

"How you had deserted this poor girl after having won her affections——"

"This is false, Sir; every word of it false!" said Cashel, purple with passion; "nor will I permit any man to drag her name before this world of slanderers in connexion with such a tale. Great Heaven! what hypocrisy it is to have a horror for the assassin and the cut-throat, and yet give shelter, in your society, to those who stab character and poison reputation! I tell you, Sir, that among those buccaneers you have so often sneered at, you'd not meet one base enough for this."

"I think you are too severe upon this kind of transgression, Cashel," said Linton, calmly. "It is as often prompted by mere idleness as malice. The great mass of people in this life have nothing to do, and they go wrong, just for occupation. There may have been—there generally is—a little grain of truth amid all the chaff of fiction; there may, therefore, be a young lady whose name was——"

"I forbid you to speak it. I knew her, and girl as she was, she was not one to suffer insult in her presence, nor shall it be offered to her in her absence."

"My dear fellow, your generous warmth should not be unjust, or else you will find few friends willing to incur your anger in the hope of doing you service. I never believed a word of this story. Marriage—adventure—even the young lady's identity, I deemed all fictions together."

Cashel muttered something he meant to be apologetic for his rudeness, and Linton was not slow in accepting even so unwilling a reparation.

"Of course I think no more of it," cried he, with affected cordiality. "I was going to tell you how Lady Kilgoff received the tidings—exactly the very opposite to what her kind correspondent had intended. It actually seemed to encourage her in her passion, as though there was a similarity in your cases. Besides, she felt, perhaps, that she was not damaging your future career, as it might be asserted she had done, were you unmarried. These are mere guesses on my part. I own to you, I have little skill in reading the Machiavellism of a female heart; the only key to its mystery I know of is, 'always suspect what is least likely.'"

"And I am to sit down patiently under all this calumny!" said Cashel, as he walked the room with hasty steps. "I am perhaps to receive at my table those whose amusement it is so to sport with my character and my fame!"

"It is a very naughty world, no doubt of it," said Linton, lighting a fresh cigar; "and the worst of it is, it tempts one always to be as roguish as one's neighbours, for self-preservation."

"You say I am not at liberty to speak of this letter to Lady Kilgoff?"

"Of course not; I am myself a defaulter in having told the matter to you."

Cashel paced the room hurriedly; and what a whirlwind of opposing thoughts rushed through his brain! for while at times all Lady Kilgoff's warnings about Linton, all his own suspicions of his duplicity and deceit, were uppermost, there was still enough in Linton's narrative, were it true, to account for Lady Kilgoff's hatred of him. The counsels *he* had given, and *she* rejected, were enough to furnish a feud for ever between them. At which side lay the truth? And then, this letter about Maritaña—who was the writer? Could it be Linton himself? and if so, would he have ventured to allude to it?

These thoughts harassed and distressed him at every instant, and in his present feeling towards Linton he could not ask his aid to solve the mystery.

Now, he was half disposed to charge him with the whole slander; his passion prompted him to seek an object for his vengeance, and the very cool air of indifference Linton assumed was provocative of anger. The next moment, he felt ashamed of such intemperate warmth, and almost persuaded himself to tell him of his proposal for Mary Leicester, and thus, prove the injustice of the suspicion about Lady Kilgoff.

"There's a tap at the door, I think," said Linton. "I suppose, if it's Frobisher, or any of them, you'd rather not be bored?" And, as if divining the answer, he arose and opened it.

"Lord Kilgoff's compliments, and requests Mr. Linton will come over to his room," said his Lordship's valet.

"Very well," said Linton, and closed the door. "What can the old Peer want at this time of night? Am I to bring a message to you, Cashel?"

Cashel gave an insolent laugh.

"Or shall I tell him the story of Davoust at Hamburg, when the Syndicate accused him of peculating, and mentioned some millions that he had abstracted from the treasury. 'All untrue, gentlemen,' said he; 'I never heard of the money before, but since you have been polite enough to mention the fact, I'll not show myself so ungrateful as to forget it.' Do you think Kilgoff would see the *à propos*?"

With this speech, uttered in that half-jocular mood habitual to him, Linton left the room, while Cashel continued to ponder over the late scene, and its probable consequences; not the least serious of which was, that Linton

was possessor of his secrets. Now, thinking upon what he had just heard of Lady Kilgoff—now, picturing to himself how Mary Leicester would regard his pledge to Maritaña, he walked impatiently up and down, when the door opened, and Linton appeared.

"Just as I surmised!" said he, throwing himself into a chair, and laughing heartily. "My Lord will be satisfied with nothing but a duel *à mort*."

"I see no cause for mirth in such a contingency," said Cashel, gravely; "the very rumour of it would ruin Lady Kilgoff."

"That of course is a grave consideration," said Linton, affecting seriousness; "but it is still more his than yours."

"*He* is a dotard!" said Cashel, passionately, "and not to be thought of. *She* is young, beautiful, and unprotected. Her fortune is a hard one already, nor is there any need to make it still more cruel."

"I half doubt she would think it so!" said Linton, with an air of levity, as he stooped to select a cigar.

"How do you mean, Sir?" cried Cashel, angrily.

"Why, simply, that when you shoot my Lord, you'll scarcely desert my Lady," said he, with the same easy manner.

"You surely told him that his suspicions were unfounded and unjust; that my intimacy, however prompted by the greatest admiration, had never transgressed the line of respect?"

"Of course, my dear fellow, I said a thousand things of you that I didn't believe,—and worse still, neither did he; but the upshot of all is, that he fancies it is a question between the Peerage and the great untitled class; he has got it into his wise brain that the Barons of Runnymede will rise from their monumental marble in horror and shame at such an invasion of 'the order;' and that there will be no longer security beneath the coronet when such a domestic Jack Cade as yourself goes at large."

"I tell you again, Linton—and let it be for the last time—your pleasantry is most ill-timed. I cannot, I will not, gratify this old man's humour, not make myself ridiculous to pamper his absurd vanity. Besides, to throw a slander upon his wife, he must seek another instrument."

By accident, mere accident, Cashel threw a more than usual significance into these last few words; and Linton, whose command over his features rarely failed, taken suddenly by what seemed a charge, grew deep red.

Cashel started as he saw the effect of his speech; he was like one who sees his chance shot has exploded a magazine.

"What!" cried he, "have you a grudge in that quarter, and is it thus you would pay it?"

"I hope you mean this in jest, Cashel?" said Linton, with a voice of forced calm.

"Faith, I never was less in a mood for joking; my words have only such meaning as your heart accuses you of."

"Come, come, then there is no harm done. But pray, be advised, and never say as much to any one who has less regard for you. And now, once more, what shall we do with Kilgoff? He has charged me to carry you a message, and I only undertook the mission in the hope of some accommodation—something that should keep the whole affair strictly amongst ourselves."

"Then you wish for my answer?"

"Of course."

"It is soon said. I'll not meet him."

"Not meet him? But, just consider——"

"I *have* considered, and I tell you once more, I'll not meet him. He cannot lay with truth any injury at my door; and I will not, to indulge his petulant vanity, be led to injure one whose fair fame is of more moment than our absurd differences."

"I own to you, Cashel, this does not strike me as a wise course. By going out and receiving his fire, you have an opportunity of declaring on the ground your perfect innocence of the charge; at least, such, I fancy, would be what I should do, in a like event. I would say, 'My Lord, it is your pleasure, under a very grave and great misconception, to desire to take my life. I have stood here for you, once, and will do so, again, as many times as you please, till either your vengeance be satisfied or your error recognised; simply repeating, as I now do, that I am innocent.' In this way you will show that personal risk is nothing with you in comparison with the assertion of a fact that regards another far more nearly than yourself. I will not dispute with you which line is the better one; but, so much will I say, This is what 'the World' would look for."

The word was a spell! Cashel felt himself in a difficulty perfectly novel. He was, as it were, arraigned to appear before a court of whose proceedings he knew little or nothing. How "the World" would regard the affair, was the whole question—what "the World" would say of Lady Kilgoff—how receive her exculpation. Now Linton assuredly knew this same "World" well; he knew it in its rare moods of good-humour, when it is pleased to speak its flatteries to some popular idol of the hour; and he knew it, in its more congenial temper, when it utters its fatal judgments on unproved delinquency and imputed wrong. None knew better than himself the course by which the "Holy Office" of slander disseminates its decrees, and he had often impressed Roland with a suitable awe of its

mysterious doings. The word was, then, talismanic; for, however at the bar of Conscience he might stand acquitted, Cashel knew that it was to another and very different jurisdiction the appeal should be made. Linton saw what was passing in his mind, for he had often watched him in similar conflicts, and he hastened to press his advantage.

"Understand me well, Cashel; I do not pretend to say that this is the common-sense solution of such a difficulty; nor is it the mode which a man with frankness of character and honourable intentions would perhaps have selected; but it is the way in which the world will expect to see it treated, and any deviation from which would be regarded as a solecism in our established code of conduct."

"In what position will it place *her?* That's the only question worth considering."

"Perfect exculpation. You, as I said before, receive Kilgoff's fire, and protest your entire innocence: my Lord accepts your assurance, and goes home to breakfast—*voilà tout!*"

"What an absurd situation! I declare to you, I shrink from the ridicule that must attach to such a rencontre, meeting a man of his age and infirmity!"

"They make pistols admirably now-a-days," said Linton, dryly; "even the least athletic can pull a hair-trigger."

Cashel made no answer to this speech, but stood still, uncertain how to act.

"Come, come," said Linton, "you are giving the whole thing an importance it does not merit: just let the old Peer have the pleasure of his bit of heroism, and it will all end as I have mentioned. They'll leave this to-morrow early, reach Killaloe to breakfast, whence Kilgoff will start for the place of meeting, and, by ten o'clock, you'll be there also. The only matter to arrange is, whom you'll get. Were it a real affair, I'd say Upton, or Frobisher; but, here, it is a question of secrecy, not skill. I'd advise, if possible, your having MacFarline."

"Sir Andrew?" said Cashel, half laughing.

"Yes; his age and standing are precisely what we want here. He'll not refuse you; and if he should, it's only telling Lady Janet that we want to shoot Kilgoff, and she'll order him out at once."

"I protest it looks more absurd than ever!" said Roland, impatiently.

"That is merely your own prejudice," said Linton. "You cannot regard single combat but as a life-struggle between two men, equal not merely in arms, but alike in bodily energy, prowess, skill, and courage. We look on the matter here as a mere lottery, wherein the less expert as often draws the prize——But there, as I vow, that was two o'clock! It struck, and I

promised to see Kilgoff again to-night. By the way, he'll want horses. Where can he get them?"

"Let him take mine; there are plenty of them, and he'll never know anything of it."

"Very true. What an obliging adversary, that actually 'posts' his enemy to the ground!"

"How am I to see MacFarline to-night?"

"You'll have to call him out of bed. Let Flint say there's an orderly from Limerick with despatches; that Biddy Molowney won't pay her poor-rate, or Paddy Flanagan has rescued his pig, and the magistrates are calling for the Fifty-something and two squadrons of horse, to protect the police. You'll soon have him up; and, once up, his Scotch blood will make him as discreet as an archdeacon. So, good night; add a codicil to your will in favour of my Lady, and to bed."

With this Linton took his candle and retired.

Cashel, once more alone, began to ponder over the difficulty of his position. The more he reasoned on the matter, the stronger appeared his fears that Lady Kilgoff's name would be compromised by a foolish and unmeaning quarrel; while, for himself, he saw nothing but ridicule and shame from his compliance. That omnipotent arbiter, "the World," might indeed be satisfied, but Roland suspected that few of its better-judging members would hesitate to condemn a course as unfeeling as it was unwise.

A quick, sharp knocking at the door of his room aroused him from his musings. It was Lady Kilgoff's maid, breathless and agitated. She came to say that Lord Kilgoff, after a scene of passionate excitement with her Ladyship, had been seized with paralysis, and that he was now lying powerless and unconscious on his bed.

"Come, Sir, for mercy's sake; come quickly. My Lady is distracted, nor can any of us think of what to do."

Cashel scratched a few lines in pencil to Tiernay, requesting his immediate presence, and, ringing for his servant, at once despatched a message to the village. This done, he followed the maid to Lord Kilgoff's chamber.

## CHAPTER LVI.

### THE SECOND SHOCK.

The waters darken, and the rustling sound
Tells of the coming "squall."

THE PILOT.

LORD KILGOFF was stretched upon a bed, breathing heavily; one arm lay straight beside him, and the other crossed upon his breast. His features were deadly pale, save in the centre of each cheek, where a deep-red spot seemed to burn. A slight, very slight distortion marked his features, and a faint tremor seemed to quiver on his lip. Beside the bed, with an expression of some conscious terror in her face, sat Lady Kilgoff; her white dressing-gown, over which her hair fell in long abundant masses, added pallor to her looks. Her eyes met Cashel's as he entered, and then reverted to the bed where the sick man lay, but with an expression less of sorrow than of bewilderment and confusion.

She looked, indeed, like one whose faculties had been stunned by some sudden shock, and had, as yet, made no effort to recal them to their wonted exercise. At the foot of the bed stood the maid, whose half-uttered sobs were the only sounds to break the stillness.

Cashel drew near, and placed his fingers on the sick man's pulse. Often had he, in his former adventurous career, felt the ebbing current of a life's blood, and measured its power by its resistance. The full but labouring swell of the heart might well deceive him, then, into the impression that no grave consequences were near. He knew not that in such affections the pulse can be round, and strong, and impulsive; and it was with an earnest conviction of truth he whispered to her,

"There is no danger."

She looked up, but it was easy to see that although the words had sounded like comfort, they had not pierced the dense veil that clouded her mind.

Cashel repeated the phrase, and said,

"Tiernay will soon be here, but have no fears; my own slight skill can tell you there is nothing of peril. Had you not better retire from this—even to the window?"

A faint "No" was all she uttered.

"He was in perfect health this afternoon?" said Cashel to the maid.

"My Lord was better than usual, Sir; he took out his collar and his star to look at them, and he spoke very pleasantly of going abroad in the spring. He was reading in the library when Mr. Linton went to him."

"Linton!" muttered Lady Kilgoff, with a shudder.

"I think I hear voices in the corridor," said Cashel. "If it be the Doctor, say I wish to speak with him before he sees my Lord."

The maid left the room to perform the commission, and scarcely had the door closed, than Lady Kilgoff started up, and seizing an object which lay on the bed, exclaimed, "How came it in your keeping?"

"What?" cried Cashel, in amazement.

"This bracelet," said she, holding out towards him the massive bracelet which Linton had contrived to detach from her arm at their meeting in the "Park."

"I never saw it before—never in my life."

She sank slowly back upon the chair without speaking, while a faint tremor shook her frame.

"The Doctor is without, Sir," said the maid at this moment, and Cashel hastened out. He spoke a few hurried words to Tiernay, and then walked towards his own room. That some deep and artful treachery had drawn its web around and about him, involving not himself alone but another too, he now clearly felt. He saw danger, as the sailor sees it in the lowering sky and fleeting scud, but as yet he knew not from what quarter the "squall" was coming. His suspicions all pointed to Linton; but why attribute such a game to him? and if such were his purpose, to what end could he practise this treachery?

"Would it not be better," thought he, "to see him at once; tell him my suspicions openly; say, that I no longer trust him as my friend, but feel towards him the misgivings of a secret enemy? If there is manliness about him, he will avow his enmity, or resent my distrust; either or both would be a relief to what I now suffer. Ah! here he comes," said he; but he was deceived; it was Tiernay entered.

"What say you, Doctor? Is the case a grave one?"

"Worse; it is nearly hopeless!"

"What! do you fear for his life?"

"Life or intellect, one or the other, must pay the penalty. This is the second shock. The shipwreck gave the first, and rent the poor edifice almost in twain; this will, in all likelihood, lay it in ashes."

"This is very dreadful!" said Cashel, upon whom the attendant event and the consequences were weighing heavily.

"He has told me all!" said Tiernay, almost sternly. "*His* jealousy and

*her* levity—the rampant pride of station—the reckless freedom of a broken heart—such are the ingredients that have made up a sad story, which may soon become a tragedy."

"But there was no reason for it; his jealousy was absurd—unfounded."

"As you will. You may go further, and say he could not lose what he never owned. I saw the peril—I even warned you of it."

"I can only comprehend you by half," said Cashel, impatiently. "You imply blame to me where I can feel none."

"I blame you as I will ever do those, who, not fearing danger for themselves, are as indifferent about their neighbours. It is not of this silly old man I am thinking here—it is of her, who, without a protector, should have found one in every man of generous and honourable feeling; not as you, perhaps, understand protection—not by the challenge hurled in the face of all who would dare to asperse her fair fame, but by that studied respect, that hallowed deference, that should avert detraction. Neither you nor any other could be the champion of her honour; but you might have been its defender by a better and a nobler heroism. It is too late to think of this now; let us not lose time in vain regrets. We must take measures that ungenerous reports should not be circulated."

The door suddenly opened at the instant, and Linton, in his dressing-gown, entered; but, seeing Tiernay, made a motion to retire.

"Come in," said Cashel; and there was something almost peremptory in the words.

"I feared I might prove an intruder, seeing the Doctor here. Is it true what my servant says, that Kilgoff is dangerously ill?"

Cashel nodded.

"Poor fellow! he has no command over himself in those paroxysms of passion, which his folly and vanity are so constantly stirring up. But is the case serious?"

"He will scarcely recover, Sir," said Tiernay; "and it was because my functions as a physician can be of so little benefit, that I ventured to offer my services as a friend in the case, and give some counsel as to what should be done."

"Most considerate, indeed," said Linton, but in an accent at once impossible to say whether ironical or the reverse.

"I said, Sir," resumed Tiernay, "that it would be becoming that no false representation should obtain currency as to the origin of the illness, nor that a momentary excitement of a feeble intellect should be assumed as the settled conviction of a sound mind. My Lord Kilgoff has had something like altercation with his wife, and being a weak and failing man, with breaking faculties, has been seized with a paralytic attack."

"Very thoughtful, all this," said Linton, gravely; "pray command me in any part of your plan where I may be serviceable."

"The plan is this," said Cashel: "here is a case where a terrible calamity has befallen, and which can be made worse only by calumny. To make the slanderer pay the heaviest penalty of his infamy——"

"Nay, nay—this is not our plan," said Tiernay, gently; "Lord Kilgoff's attack must be spoken of without connexion with any circumstances which preceded it this evening. Nothing was more likely to occur than such a seizure: his age—his late illness—his peculiar habit, all predisposed to it."

"Just so," interposed Cashel, hastily; "and as none save you, Linton, and myself, know anything of the matter, it need never gain wider publicity."

"Of course nothing can be easier than this. The Lady 'Janets' need never hear a word more than you choose to tell them," said Linton.

"In a few days he will bear removal. Change will be necessary for him; and, in fact, our caution is, doubtless, greater than the necessity warrants," added Tiernay.

"You will, of course, leave everything to take its course in the house?" said Linton. "To interfere with all the plans of pleasure would be to give rise to malicious rumours."

"I scarcely know how to act," said Cashel. "It looks unfeeling and unkind that we should give ourselves up to gaiety at such a moment."

"Mr. Linton's counsel may be wise, notwithstanding," said Tiernay. "His Lordship may continue a long time in his present state."

"Exactly what I mean," said Linton. "He will probably linger on, unchanged; so that if events follow their habitual train, there will be little time or temptation to spread scandal about him; and then, what, at first blush, seems to lack kindness, is, in reality, the very truest and most considerate service we can render."

"Then you will look to this part of the matter, Linton?" said Cashel, on whom his apparent frankness had resumed its former ascendancy.

"Leave it all to me," said he; "and so good night." And, with that, he departed, leaving Cashel and Tiernay together.

They were silent for some minutes, as Linton's retiring steps were heard going towards his own room. Soon after the loud bang of a door resounded through the house, and all was still. Little knew they, that scarcely had he gained his room than he left it noiselessly, and, slipping down the great stairs, crossed the hall, and, entering the theatre, proceeded by the secret passage which led to Cashel's dressing-room, and through

the thin panel that covered which, he could easily overhear whatever was spoken within.

"At least you will allow that he has been candid with us here?" said Cashel, in a tone of remonstrance.

"I cannot afford to give a man my confidence, because I am unable to sound his intentions," said Tiernay. "I disliked this Linton from the first, and I never yet saw any distinct reason to alter the sentiment. That he has puzzled me—ay, completely puzzled me and all my calculations, within the last few days, is quite true. He has done that which, in a man like himself, disconcerts one altogether, because it is so difficult to trace his probable motive. What would you say, were I to tell you that this deep man of the world, this artful and subtle gambler in the game of life, has actually proposed for a girl who is utterly without fortune or family influence? That she is endowed with noble attributes —that she is one a prince might have chosen to share his fortunes, I deem as nothing to the purpose, for I cannot conceive such qualities as hers could weigh with him; but so it is, he has actually made an offer of his hand."

"Dare your confidence go further?" said Cashel, eagerly, "and tell me—to whom?"

"Yes. I have been guilty of one breach of faith in telling you so much, and I'll hazard all, and let you hear the remainder. It was Mary Leicester."

"Mary Leicester!" echoed Cashel, but in a voice barely audible.

"Mary Leicester," continued Tiernay, "may count it among her triumphs to have attracted one whom all the world regards as an adventurer; a man living by the exercise of his clever wits, profiting by the weaknesses and follies of his acquaintances, and deriving his subsistence from the vices he knows how to pamper."

"And what answer has he received?" asked Cashel, timidly.

"None, as yet. Poor Corrigan, overwhelmed by misfortune, threatened by one whose menace, if enforced, would be his death-stroke, has begged for a day or two to consider; but the reply is certain."

"And will be——" Cashel could not command his emotion as he spoke.

"Refusal."

"You are certain of this, Tiernay? You are positive of what you say?"

"I know it. My old friend, were he even inclined to this alliance, could never coerce her; and Mary Leicester has long since learned to distinguish

between the agreeable qualities of a clever man and the artful devices of a treacherous one. She knows him; she reads him thoroughly, and as thoroughly she despises him! I will not say that her impressions have been unaided; she received more than one letter from a kind friend—Lady Kilgoff; and these were her first warnings. Poor Corrigan knows nothing of this; and Mary, seeing how Linton's society was pleasurable to the old man, actually shrank from the task of undeceiving him. 'He has so few pleasures,' said she to me one evening; 'why deny him this one?'—'It is a poison which cannot injure in small doses, Doctor,' added she, another time; and so, half jestingly, she reasoned, submitting to an intimacy that was odious to her, because it added a gleam of comfort to the chill twilight of his declining life."

"And you are sure of this—you are certain she will refuse him?" cried Cashel, eagerly.

"I am her confidant," said Tiernay, "and you see how worthily I repay the trust! Nay, nay! I would not tell these things to any other living; but I feel that I owe them to you. I have seen more misery in life from concealment, from the delicacy that shuns a frank avowal, than from all the falsehood that ever blackened a bad heart. Mary has told me all her secrets; ay—don't blush so deeply—and some of yours also."

Cashel did indeed grow red at this speech, and, in his effort to conceal his shame, assumed an air of dissatisfaction.

"Not so, my dear young friend," said Tiernay; "I did not mean to say one word which could offend you. Mary has indeed trusted me with the secret nearest to her heart. She has told me of the proudest moment of her life."

"When she rejected me?" said Cashel, bitterly.

"So was it—when she rejected you," re-echoed Tiernay. "When poor, she refused wealth; when friendless in all that friendship can profit, she declined protection; when almost homeless, she refused a home; when sought by one whom alone of all the world she preferred, she said him nay! It was at that moment of self-sacrifice, when she abandoned every thought of present happiness and of future hope, and devoted herself to one humble but holy duty, she felt the ecstasy of a martyr's triumph. You may think that these are exaggerations, and that I reckon at too exalted a standard such evidences of affection, but I do not think so. I believe that there is more courage in the patient submission to an obscure and unnoticed fortune, beset with daily trials and privations, than in braving the stake or the scaffold, with human sympathies to exalt the sacrifice."

"But I offered to share this duty with her; to be a son to him whom she regarded as a father."

"How little you know of the cares—the thoughtful, watchful, anxious cares—you were willing to share! You could give wealth and splendour, it is true; you could confer all the blandishments of fortune, all the luxuries that rich men command; but, one hour of gentle solicitude in sickness—one kind look, that recalled years of tenderness—one accustomed service, the tribute of affection—were worth all that gold could purchase, told ten times over. And these are not to be acquired; they are the instincts that, born in childhood, grow strong with years, till at length they form that atmosphere of love in which parents live among their children. No! Mary felt that it were a treason to rob her poor old grandfather of even a thought that should be his."

"But, I repeat it," cried Cashel, passionately, "I would participate in every care; I would share her duties, as she should share my fortunes."

"And what guarantee did you give for your fitness to such a task?" said Tiernay. "Was it by your life of pleasure, a career of wild and wasteful extravagance—was it by the unbridled freedom with which you followed every impulse of your will—was it by the example your friendships exhibited—was it by an indiscriminating generosity, that only throws a shade over better-regulated munificence, you would show that you were suited to a life of unobtrusive, humble duties?"

"You wrong me," said Cashel. "I would have lived in that cottage yonder, without a thought or a wish for the costly pleasures you think have such attractions for me."

"You had already sold it to your friend."

"Sold it!—never!—to whom?"

"I thought Linton had purchased it."

"Never!"

"Well, you gave it as a gift?"

"I did intend to do so; but seeing the value Corrigan puts upon it, I will give Linton double—thrice the value, rather than part with it."

"What if he refuse?"

"He will not. Linton's fancies never run counter to solid advantages. A thousand pounds, with him, is always twice five hundred, come with what condition it may."

"But Linton may, for his own reasons, think differently here; his proposal to marry seems as though it were part of some settled plan; and if you have already given him a legal claim here, my opinion is, that he will uphold it."

"That I have never done; but my word is pledged, and to it he may hold me, if he will. Meanwhile, I have seen Kennyfeck this morning. The man Hoare has offered us a large sum on mortgage, and I have promised to meet

them both the day after to-morrow. If I read Tom aright, 10,000*l.* will free me from every claim he has upon me."

"A heavy sum, but not ill spent if it liberate you from his friendship," cried Tiernay, eagerly.

"And so it shall."

"You promise me this—you give me your word upon it?"

"I do."

"Then there are good days in store for you. That man's intimacy has been your bane; even when you thought least of it, his influence swayed your actions and perverted your motives. Under the shadow of his evil counsels your judgment grew warped and corrupted; you saw all things in a false and distorted light; and your most fatal error of all was, that you deemed yourself a 'gentleman.'"

I have done with him for ever," said Cashel, with slow, deliberate utterance.

"Again I say, good days are in store for you," said Tiernay.

"I cannot live a life of daily, hourly distrust," said Cashel; "nor will I try it. I will see him to-morrow; I will tell him frankly that I am weary of his fashionable protectorate; that as a scholar in modish tastes I should never do him credit, and that we must part. Our alliance was ever a factitious one; it will not be hard to sever it."

"You mistake much," said Tiernay; "the partnership will not be so easily relinquished by him who reaps all the profit."

"You read me only as a dupe," said Cashel, fiercely.

Tiernay made no reply, but waving his hand in adieu, left the room.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### LINTON INSTIGATES KEANE TO MURDER.

Hell's eloquence—"TEMPTATION!"
HAROLD.

TOM KEANE, the Gatekeeper, sat moodily at his door on the morning after the events recorded in our last chapter. His reflections seemed of the gloomiest, and absorbed him so completely, that he never noticed the mounted groom, who, despatched to seek the Doctor for Lord Kilgoff, twice summoned him in vain to open the gate.

"Halloa!" cried the smartly-equipped servant, "stupid! will you open that gate, I say?"

"It's not locked," said Tom, looking up, but without the slightest indication of obeying the request.

"Don't you see the mare won't stand?" cried he, with an oath.

Tom smoked away without replying.

"Sulky brute you are!" cried the groom; "I'm glad we're to see the last of you soon."

With this he managed to open the gate and pass on his way.

"So, it's for turnin' me out, yez are," said Tom to himself; "turnin' me out on the road—to starve, or maybe—to rob"—(these words were uttered between the puffs of his tobacco-smoke)—"after forty years in the same place."

The shrill barking of a cur-dog, an animal that in spitefulness as in mangy condition seemed no bad type of its master, now aroused him, and Tom muttered, "Bite him, Blaze! hould him fast, yer soule!"

"Call off your dog, Keane—call him off!" cried out a voice, whose tones at once bespoke a person of condition; and at the same instant Linton appeared. "You'd better fasten him up, for I feel much tempted to ballast his heart with a bullet."

And he showed a pistol which he held at full cock in his fingers.

"Faix, ye may shoot him for all I care," said Tom; "he's losing his teeth, and won't be worth a 'trawneen' 'fore long. Go in there — into the house," cried he, sulkily; and the animal shrank away craven and cowed.

"You ought to keep him tied up," said Linton; "every one complains of him."

"So I hear," said Tom, with a low, sardonic laugh; "he used only to bite the beggars, but he's begun now to be wicked with the gentlemen. I suppose he finds they taste mighty near alike."

"Just so," said Linton, laughing; "if the cur could speak, he'd tell us a labourer was as tender as 'my Lord.' I've come over to see you," added he, after a moment's pause, "and to say that I'm sorry to have failed in my undertaking regarding you; they are determined to turn you out."

"I was thinking so," said Tom, moodily.

"I did my best. I told them you had been many years on the estate——"

"Forty-two."

"Just so. I said forty and upwards—that your children had grown up on it—that you were actually like a part of the property. I spoke of the hardship of turning a man at your time of life, with a helpless family too, upon the wide world. I even went so far as to say, that these were not the times for such examples; that there was a spirit abroad of regard for

the poor man, a watchful inquiry into the evils of his condition, that made these 'clearances,' as they call them, unwise and impolitic, as well as cruel."

"An' what did they say to that?" asked Tom, abruptly.

"Laughed—laughed heartily."

"They laughed?"

"No—I am wrong," said Linton, quickly, "Kennyfeck did not laugh on the contrary, he seemed grave, and observed that up at Drumcoologan—— is there such a name?"

"Ay, and nice boys they're in it," said Tom, nodding.

"'Well, up at Drumcoologan,' said he, 'such a step would be more than dangerous.'

"'How do you mean?' said Mr. Cashel.

"'They'd take the law into their own hands,' replied Kennyfeck.—The man who would evict one of those fellows might as well make his will, if he wished to leave one behind him. They are determined fellows, whose fathers and grandfathers have lived and died on the land, and find it rather hard to understand how a bit of parchment with a big seal on it should have more force than kith and kindred."

"Did ould Kennyfeck say that?" asked Tom, with a glance of unutterable cunning.

"No," replied Linton, "that observation was mine, for really I was indignant at that summary system which disposes of a population as coolly as men change the cattle from one pasturage to another. Mr. Cashel, however, contented himself with a laugh, and such a laugh as, for his sake, I am right glad none of his unhappy tenantry were witness to.

"'You may do as you please down here, Sir,' said Kennyfeck—who, by the way, does not seem to be any friend of yours—'but the Drumcoologan fellows must be humoured.'

"'I will see that,' said Mr. Cashel, who, in his own hot-headed way, actually likes opposition, 'but we'll certainly begin with this fellow Keane.'

"'I suppose you'll give him the means to emigrate?' said I, addressing Kennyfeck.

"'We generally do in these cases,' said he.

"'I'll not give the scoundrel a farthing,' broke in Mr. Cashel. 'I took a dislike to him from the very hour I came here.' And then he went on to speak about the dirt and neglect about the gate-lodge, the ragged appearance of the children—even your own looks displeased him; in fact, I saw plainly that somehow you had contrived to make him your enemy, not merely of a few days' standing, but actually from the moment of his first meeting you. Kennyfeck, though not your friend, behaved better than

expected: he said that to turn you out was to leave you to starve; that there was no employment to be had in the country; that your children were all young and helpless; that you were not accustomed to daily labour; indeed, he made out your case to be a very hard one, and, backed as it was by myself, I hoped that we should have succeeded; but, as I said before, Mr. Cashel, for some reason of his own, or perhaps without any reason, hates you. He has resolved that out you shall go, and go you must!"

Keane said nothing, but sat moodily moving his foot backwards and forwards on the gravel.

"For Mr. Cashel's sake, I'm not sorry the lot has fallen upon a quiet-tempered fellow like yourself; there are plenty here who wouldn't bear the hardship so patiently."

Keane looked up, and the keen twinkle of his grey eyes seemed to read the other's very thoughts. Linton, so proof against the searching glances of the well-bred world, actually cowered under the vulgar stare of the peasant.

"So you think he's lucky that I'm not one of the Drumcoologan boys?" said Keane; and his features assumed a smile of almost insolent meaning.

"They're bold fellows, I've heard," said Linton, "and quick to resent an injury."

"Maybe there's others just as ready," said he, doggedly.

"Many are ready to feel one," said Linton, "that I'm well aware of. The difference is, that some men sit down under their sorrows, crestfallen and beaten; others rise above them, and make their injuries the road to fortune. And really, much as people say against this 'wild justice' of the people, when we consider that they have no other possible—that the law is ever against them—that their own right hand alone is their defence against oppression—one cannot wonder that many a tyrant landlord falls beneath the stroke of the ruined tenant, and particularly when the tyranny dies with the tyrant."

Keane listened greedily, but spoke not; and Linton went on:

"It so often happens that, as in the present case, by the death of one man, the estate gets into Chancery; and then, it's nobody's affair who pays and who does not. Tenants then have as much right as the landlord used to have. As the rents have no owner, there's little trouble taken to collect them; and when any one makes a bold stand and refuses to pay, they let him alone, and just turn upon the others that are easier to deal with."

"That's the way it used to be here long ago," said Keane.

"Precisely so. You remember it yourself, before Mr. Cashel's time; and so it might be again, if he should try any harsh measures with those

Drumcoologan fellows. Let me light my cigar from your pipe, Keane," said he; and, as he spoke, he laid down the pistol which he had still carried in his hand. Keane's eyes rested on the handsome weapon with an expression of stern intensity.

"Cashel would think twice of going up to that mountain barony to-morrow, if he but knew the price that lies upon his head. The hundreds of acres that to-day are a support to as many people,—and this day twelvemonth, perhaps, may lie barren and waste; while the poor peasants that once settled there have died of hunger, or wander friendless and houseless in some far-away country,—and all this to depend on the keen eye and the steady hand of any one man brave enough to pull a trigger!"

"Is he going to Drumcoologan to-morrow?" asked Keane, dryly.

"Yes; he is to meet Kennyfeck there, and go over the property with him, and on Tuesday evening he is to return here. Perhaps I may be able to put in another word for you, Tom, but I half fear it is hopeless."

"'Tis a lonely road that leads from Sheehan's Mill to the ould churchyard," said Keane, more bent upon following out his own fancies than in attending to Linton.

"So I believe," said Linton; "but Mr. Cashel cares little for its solitude; he rides always without a servant, and so little does he fear danger, that he never goes armed."

"I heard that afore," observed Tom, significantly.

"I have often remonstrated with him about it," said Linton. "I've said, 'Remember how many there are interested in your downfal. One bullet through your forehead is a lease for ever, rent-free, to many a man whose life is now one of grinding poverty.' But he is self-willed and obstinate. In his pride, he thinks himself a match for any man—as if a rifle-bore and a percussion-lock like that, there, did not make the merest boy his equal! Besides, he will not bear in mind that his is a life exposed to a thousand risks; he has neither family nor connexions interested in him: were he to be found dead on the roadside to-morrow, there is neither father nor brother, nor uncle nor cousin, to take up the inquiry how he met his fate. The coroner would earn his guinea or two, and there would be the end of it!"

"Did he ever do you a bad turn, Mr. Linton?" asked Keane, while he fixed his cold eyes on Linton with a stare of insolent effrontery.

"Me! injure me? Never. He would have shown me many a favour, but I would not accept of such. How came you to ask this question?"

"Because you seem so interested about his comin' home safe to-morrow evening," said Tom, with a dry laugh.

"So I am!" said Linton, with a smile of strange meaning.

"An' if he was to come to harm, sorry as you'd be, you couldn't help it, Sir?" said Keane, still laughing.

"Of course not; these mishaps are occurring every day, and will continue as long as the country remains in its present state of wretchedness."

Keane seemed to ponder over the last words, for he slouched his hat over his eyes, and sat with clasped hands and bent-down head for several minutes in silence. At last he spoke, but it was in a tone and with a manner whose earnestness contrasted strongly with his former levity.

"Can't we speak openly, Mr. Linton?—wouldn't it be best for both of us to say fairly what's inside of us this minit?"

"I'm perfectly ready," said Linton, seating himself beside him; "I do not desire anything better than to show my confidence in a man of courage like yourself."

"Then let us not be losin' our time," said the other, gruffly. "What's the job worth? that's the chat. What is it worth?"

"You are certainly a most practical speaker," said Linton, laughing in his own peculiar way, "and clear away preliminaries in a very summary fashion."

"If I'm not worth trustin', now," replied the other, doggedly, "ye'd betther have nothin' to say to me."

"I did not mean that, nor anything like it, Tom. I was only alluding to your straightforward, business-like way of treating a subject which less vigorously-minded men would approach timidly and carefully."

"Faix, I'd go up to him bouldly, ir ye mane that!" cried the other, who misconceived the eulogy passed upon his candour.

"I know it—well I know it," said Linton, encouraging a humour he had thus casually evoked; for in the bloodshot eyes and flushed cheeks of the other, it was plain to see what was passing within him.

"Do ye want it done? Tell me that—be fair and above-boord with me—do you want it done?"

Linton was silent; but a slight, an almost imperceptible motion of his brows made the reply.

"And now, what's it worth?" resumed Tom.

"To *you*," said Linton, speaking slowly, "it is worth much—everything It is all the difference between poverty, suffering, and a gaol, and a life of ease and comfort either here or in America. Your little farm, that you hold at present by the will, or rather the caprice, of your landlord, becomes your own for ever; when I say for ever, I mean what is just as good, since the estate will be thrown back into Chancery; and it is neither *your* children nor mine will see the end of that."

"That's no answer to *me*," said Keane, fixing his cold, steady stare on

Linton's face. "I want to know—and I won't ax it again—what is it worth to *you?*"

"To *me!*—to *me!*" said Linton, starting. "How could it be worth anything to *me?*"

"You know that best yourself," said Tom, sulkily.

"I am neither the heir to his estate, nor one of his remote kindred. If I see a fine property going to ruin, and the tenantry treated like galley-slaves, I may, it is true, grieve over it; I may also perceive what a change—a total and happy change—a mere accident might work; for, after all, just think of the casualties that every day brings forth——"

"I hav'n't time for these thoughts, now," muttered Tom.

"Always to the point—always thinking of the direct question!" said Linton, smiling.

"'Tisn't yer Honer's failin', anyhow," said Tom, laughing sardonically.

"You shall not say that of me, Tom," said Linton, affecting to relish the jocularity; "I'll be as prompt and ready as yourself. I'll wager you ten sovereigns in gold—there they are—that I can keep a secret as well as you can."

As he spoke, he threw down the glittering pieces upon the step on which they sat.

The peasant's eyes were bent upon the money with a fierce and angry expression, less betokening desire than actual hate. As he looked at them, his cheek grew red, and then pale, and red once more; his broad chest rose and fell like a swelling wave, and his bony fingers clasped each other in a rigid grasp.

"There are twenty more where these came from," said Linton, significantly.

"That's a high price—devil a lie in it!" muttered Tom, thoughtfully.

Linton spoke not, but seemed to let the charm work.

"A high price, but the 'dhrop' in Limerick is higher," said Tom, with a grin.

"Perhaps it may be," rejoined Linton, carelessly; "though I don't perceive how the fact can have any interest for you or me."

"Be Gorra, ye're a cowld man, anyhow," said Keane, his savage nature struck with admiring wonder at the unmoved serenity of Linton's manner.

"I'm a determined one," said Linton, who saw the necessity of impressing his companion; "and with such alone would I wish to act."

"And where would you be, after it was all over, Sir?"

"Here, where I am at present, assisting the Magistrates to scour the country—searching every cabin at Drumcoologan—draining ditches to dis-

cover the weapon, and arresting every man that killed a pig and got blood on his corduroys for the last fortnight."

"And where would *I* be?" asked Keane.

"Here too; exactly where you sit this moment, quietly waiting till the outcry was over. Nor need that make you impatient. I have said already there is neither wife, nor sister, nor brother, nor child to take up the pursuit. There are forty people in the great house yonder, and there wouldn't be four of them left two hours after it was known, nor one out of the four that would give himself the trouble of asking how it happened."

"An' them's *Gentlemen!*" said Keane, closing his lips and shaking his head sententiously.

Linton arose; he did not over-fancy the turn of reflection Tom's remark implied: it looked too like the expression of a general condemnation of his class—at the very moment, too, when he was desirous of impressing him with the fullest trust and confidence in his own honour.

"I believe it's safer to have nothin' to do with it," muttered Keane.

"As you please, friend," replied Linton; "I never squeeze any man's conscience. *You* know best what your own life is."

"Hard enough, that's what it is," said the other, bitterly.

"You can also make a guess what it will be in future, when you leave this."

A deep groan was all that he gave for answer.

"For all that *I* know, you may have many friends who'll not see your wife and children begging along the roads, or sitting in a hole scooped out of a clay ditch, without food or fire, waiting for the fever to finish what famine has begun. You haven't far to seek for what I mean; about two hundred yards from that gate yonder, there's a group exactly like it."

"Ye're a terrible man, that's the truth," said Tom, as he wiped the big drops of perspiration from his forehead. "Be Gorra, I never seed your like afore!"

"I told you that I was a *determined* man," said Linton, sternly; "and I'm sorry to see that's not what I should say of *you*." He moved a step or two as he spoke, and then turning carelessly back, added, "Leave that money for me at 'The House,' this evening; I don't wish to carry gold about me on the roads here." And with this negligent remark he departed.

Linton sauntered carelessly away; nothing in his negligent air and carriage to show that he was not lounging to kill the weary hours of a winter's day. No sooner, however, had he turned an angle of the road than he entered the wood, and with cautious steps retraced his way, till he stood within a few paces of where Keane yet sat, still and motionless.

His worn hat was pressed down upon his brows, his hands were firmly clasped, and his head bent so as to conceal his features; and in this attitude he remained as rigidly impassive as though he were seized with a catalepsy. A few heavy drops of rain fell, and then a low growling roar of thunder followed, but he heeded not these signs of coming storm. The loud cawing of the rooks as they hastened homeward filled the air, but he never once lifted his head to watch them! Another crash of thunder was heard, and suddenly the rain burst forth in torrents. Swooping along in heavy drifts, it blackened the very atmosphere, and rushed in rivulets down the gravel walk; but still he sat, while the pelting storm penetrated his frail garments and soaked them through. Nor was it till the water lay in pools at his feet that he seemed conscious of the hurricane. Then rising suddenly, he shook himself roughly, and entered the house.

Linton's eyes were earnestly fixed upon the stone—he crept nearer to observe it. THE MONEY WAS GONE.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

### LINTON IS BAFFLED—HIS RAGE AT THE DISCOVERY.

**The mask is falling fast.—HAROLD.**

THE day of the great masquerade arrived; and, from an early hour, the whole household was astir in preparing for the occasion. The court-yard was thronged with carriages of various sorts. Confectioners from London, table-deckers from Paris, were there, accompanied by all the insignia of their callings. Great lumbering packing-cases were strewn about; while rich stuffs, rare exotics, and costly delicacies littered the stone benches, and even lay upon the pavement, in all the profusion of haste and recklessness. To see the rare and rich articles which were heaped on every side, almost suggested the notion that it was some gorgeous mansion which was put to pillage. There was that, too, in the lounging insolence of the servants, as they went, that favoured the illusion. The wanton waste exhibited everywhere was the very triumph of that vulgar and vindictive spirit which prompts the followers of a spendthrift master to speed the current of his ruin. Such would seem to be the invariable influence that boundless profusion exercises on the mind; and it is thus that affluence, unchastened by taste, unruled by principle, is always a corrupter!

A light travelling-carriage, with a few articles of travelling use attached, stood in the midst of all this confusion; and shortly after day-dawn two gentlemen issued from the house, and taking their seats, drove hastily forth, and at full speed passed down the avenue towards the high road.

These were Cashel and Mr. Kennyfeck, who had made an appointment to meet Mr. Hoare at Killaloe and proceed with him to Drumcoologan, on which portion of the estate it was proposed to raise a considerable sum by mortgage.

Some observation of Mr. Kennyfeck upon the wasteful exhibition of the scene in the court-yard, was met by a sharp and angry reply from Cashel; and these were both overheard as they issued forth—vague words, spoken thoughtlessly at the time, but to be remembered afterwards with a heavier significance than the speakers could have anticipated! As they hastened along, little was said on either side; the trifling irritation of the first moment created a reserve, which deepened into actual coldness, as each following out his own thoughts took no heed of his companion's.

Kennyfeck's mind was full of sad and gloomy forebodings. The reckless outlay he had witnessed for weeks back was more than a princely fortune could sustain. The troops of useless servants, the riotous disorder of the household, the unchecked, unbridled waste on every side, demanded supplies to raise which they were already reduced to loans at usurious interest What was to come of such a career, save immediate and irretrievable ruin.

As for Cashel, his reveries were even darker still. The whirlwind current of events seemed to carry him onward without any power of resistance. He saw his fortune wasted—his character assailed—his heart-offered proposal rejected,—all at once, and as if by the influence of some evil destiny. Vigorous resolutions for the future warred with fears lest that they were made too late, and he sat with closed eyes and compressed lips, silent and sunk in meditation.

Leaving them, therefore, to pursue a journey on which their companionship could scarcely afford much pleasure to the reader, let us turn to one who, whatever his other defects, rarely threw away the moments of his life on unavailing regrets: this was Mr. Linton. If he was greatly disappointed by the information he gleaned when overhearing the conversation between Cashel and the Doctor, he did not suffer his anger either to turn him from his path, or distract him from his settled purpose.

"To-day for ambition!" said he, "to-morrow revenge!"

Too well accustomed to obstacles to be easily thwarted, he recognised life as a struggle wherein the combatant should never put off his armour.

"She must and shall accept me as her husband; on that I am determined. A great game, and a glorious stake, shall not be foiled for a silly

girl's humour. Were she less high-flown in her notions, and with more of the 'world' about her, I might satisfy her scruples, that, of her affections —her heart as she would call it—there is no question here. 'Je suis bon prince'—I never coerce my liege's loyalty. As to the old man, his dotage takes the form of intrepidity, so that it might be unsafe to use menace with him. The occasion must suggest the proper tactic."

And with this shrewd resolve he set forth to pay his visit at the cottage. If in his step and air, as he went, none could have read the lover's ardour, there was that in his proud carriage and glancing eye that bespoke a spirit revelling in its own sense of triumph.

While Mr. Linton is thus pursuing his way, let us use the privilege of our craft by anticipating him, and taking a peep at that cottage interior in which he is so soon to figure. Old Mr. Corrigan had arisen from his bed weary and tired; a night of sleepless care weighed heavily on him; and he sat at his untasted breakfast with all the outward signs of a sick man.

Mary Leicester, too, was pale and sad-looking; and although she tried to wear her wonted smile, and speak with her accustomed tones, the heavy eyelids and the half-checked sighs that broke from her at times betrayed how sad was the spirit from which they came.

"I have been dreaming of that old nunnery at Bruges all night, Mary," said her grandfather, after a long and unbroken silence; "and you cannot think what a hold it has taken of my waking thoughts. I fancied that I was sitting in the little parlour, waiting to see you, and that, at last, a dark veiled figure appeared at the grille, and beckoned me to approach. I hastened to do so, my heart fluttering with I know not what mixture of hope and fear—the hope, it might be you, and then the fear, stronger than even hope, that I should read sadness in that sweet face—sorrow, Mary—regret for leaving that world you never were to see more."

"And was it me, dearest Papa?"

"No, Mary," said he, with a lower and more meaning tone, "it was another, one whom I never saw before. She came to tell me that—that"—he faltered, and wiping a tear from his eyes, made an effort to seem calm—"that I had lost you, darling! lost by a separation darker and more terrible than even the iron bars of the nunnery can make. And although I bethought me that you had but gone there, whither I myself was hastening, I felt sorrow-struck by the tidings. I had clung so long to the hope of leaving you behind me here, to enjoy that world of which all your affectionate care has denied you enjoyment—to know how, amidst its troubles and reverses, there are healing springs of love that recompense its heaviest inflictions—I cherished this wish so long, so ardently, that I could not face the conviction which told me it should never be."

"Dearest Papa, remember this was but a dream; bethink you, for an instant, that it was all unreal; that I am beside you, my hand in yours, my head upon your shoulder; that we are not parted, nor ever shall be."

The tone of deep fervour in which she spoke drew tears from the old man's eyes, and he turned away to hide them.

"It was but a dream, as you say, Mary; but do not my waking thoughts conjure up a future to the full as gloomy? A few months, at furthest, a year or so more—less sanguine prophets would perhaps say weeks—and where shall I be? and where you, Mary?"

The old man's grief could no longer be restrained, and it was in a perfect burst of sorrow the last words came forth. She would have spoken, but she knew not from what source to draw consolation. The future, which to his eyes looked dark and louring, presented an aspect no less gloomy to her own; and her only remedy against its depressing influence was to make her present cares occupy her mind, to the exclusion of every other thought.

"And yet, Mary," said he, recovering something of his habitual tone, "there is an alternative—one which, if we could accept of it from choice as freely as we might adopt it from convenience, would solve our difficulties at once. My heart misgives me, dearest, as I approach it. I tremble to think how far my selfishness may bias you—how thoughts of *me*, old and worthless as I am, may rise uppermost in your breast and gain the mastery, where other and very different feelings should prevail. I have ever been candid with you, my child, and I have reaped all the benefit of my frankness; let me then tell you all. An offer has been made for your hand, Mary, by one who, while professing the utmost devotion to you, has not forgotten your old grandfather. He asks that he should be one of us, Mary—a new partner in our firm—a new member in the little group around our hearth. He speaks like one who knew the ties that bind us most closely—he talks of our home here as we ourselves might do—he has promised that we shall never leave it, too. Does your heart tell you whom I mean, Mary? If not, if you have not already gone before me in all I have been saying, his visions of happiness are baseless fabrics. Be candid with me, as I have ever been with you. It is a question on which everything of the future hangs; say if you guess of whom I speak."

Mary Leicester's cheek grew scarlet; she tried to speak, but could not; but with a look far more eloquent than words, she pressed the old man's hand to her lips, and was silent.

"I was right then, Mary; you have guessed him. Now, my sweet child, there is one other confession you must make me, or leave me to divine it from that crimson cheek. Have his words found an echo in your heart?"

The old man drew her more closely to his side, and passed his arm around her as he spoke; while she, with heaving bosom and bent-down head, seemed struggling with an agitation she could not master. At last she said:

"You have often told me, Papa, that disproportion of fortune was an insurmountable obstacle to married happiness; that the sense of perfect equality in condition was the first requisite of that self-esteem which must be the basis of an affection free and untrammelled from all unworthy considerations."

"Yes, dearest; I believe this to be true."

"Then, surely, the present is not a case in point; for while there is wealth and influence on one side, there are exactly the opposites on the other. If *he* be in a position to make his choice among the great and titled of the land, *my* destiny lies among the lowly and the humble. What disparity could be greater?"

"When I spoke of equality," said the old man, "I referred rather to that of birth and lineage than to any other. I meant that social equality by which uniformity of tastes and habits are regulated. There is no *mésalliance* where good blood runs on both sides."

This was the tenderest spot in the old man's nature; the pride of family surviving every successive stroke of fortune, or, rather, rising superior to them all.

"I thought, moreover," said Mary, "that in his preference of me there was that suddenness which savoured more of caprice than deep conviction. How should I reckon upon its lasting? What evidence have I that he cares for the qualities which will not change in me, and not for those which spring from youth and happiness?—for I am happy, dearest Pa; so happy that, with all our trials and difficulties, I often accuse myself of levity—insensibility even—feeling so light-hearted as I do."

The old man looked at her with rapture, and then pressed his lips upon her forehead.

"From all this, then, I gather, Mary," said he, smiling archly, that, certain misgivings apart, the proposition is not peculiarly disagreeable to you?"

"I am sure I have not said so," said she, confusedly.

"No, dearest; only looked it. But stay, I heard the wicket close—there is some one coming. I expected Tiernay on a matter of business. Leave us together, child; and, till we meet, think over what we've been saying. Remember, too, that although I would not influence your decision, my heart would be relieved of its heaviest load if this could be."

Mary Leicester arose hastily and retired, too happy to hide, in the secrecy

of her own room, that burst of emotion which oppressed her, and whose utterance she could no longer restrain.

Scarcely had she gone, when Linton crossed the grass-plot, and entered the cottage. A gentle tap at the door of the drawing-room announced him, and he entered. A more acute observer than Mr. Corrigan might have remarked that the deferential humility so characteristic of his manner was changed for an air of more purpose-like determination. He came to carry a point by promptness and boldness; and already his bearing announced the intention.

After a few words of customary greeting, and an inquiry more formal than cordial for Miss Leicester's health, he assumed an air of solemn purpose, and said,

"You will not accuse me of undue impatience, my dear Mr. Corrigan, nor think me needlessly pressing, if I tell you that I have come here this morning to learn the answer to my late proposition. Circumstances have occurred at the Hall to make my remaining there, even another day, almost impossible. Cashel's last piece of conduct is of such a nature as to make his acquaintance as derogatory as his friendship."

"What was it?"

"Simply this. Lord Kilgoff has at length discovered, what all the world has known for many a day back; and, in his passionate indignation, the poor old man has been seized with a paralytic attack."

Mr. Corrigan passed his hand across his brow, as if to clear away some terrible imagination, and sat then pale, silent, and attentive, as Linton went on:

"The most heartless is yet to come! While this old man lies stretched upon his bed—insensible and dying—this is the time Cashel selects to give a great entertainment, a ball, to above a thousand people. It is almost too much for belief—so I feel it myself. The palsied figure of his victim—his victim do I say? there are two: that miserable woman, who sits as paralysed by terror as he is by disease—might move any man from such levity; but Cashel is superior to such timidity; he fancies, I believe, that this ruffian hardihood is manliness, that brutal insensibility means courage, and so he makes his house the scene of an orgie, when his infamy has covered it with shame. I see how this affects you, Sir. It is a theme on which I would never have touched did it not concern my own fortunes. For me, the acquaintance of such a man is no longer possible. For the sake of that unhappy woman, whom I knew in better days—to cover, as far as may be, the exposure that sooner or later must follow her fault—I am still here. You will, therefore, forgive my importunity if I ask if Miss Leicester has been informed of my proposal, and with what favour she deigns to regard it."

"I have told my granddaughter, Sir," said the old man, tremulously; "we have talked together on the subject; and while I am not able to speak positively of her sentiments towards you, it strikes me that they are assuredly not unfavourable. The point is, however, too important to admit a doubt: with your leave, we will confer together once again."

"Might I not be permitted to address the young lady myself, Sir? The case too nearly concerns all my future happiness to make me neglect whatever may conduce to its accomplishment."

The old man hesitated; he knew not well what reply to make. At length he said,

"Be it so, Mr. Linton; you shall have this permission. I only ask, that before you do so, we should clearly and distinctly understand each other. *We* are of the world, and can discuss its topics, man to man. With *her*, the matter rests on other and very different grounds."

"Of course; so I understand the permission, Sir," said Linton, courteously, "on the distinct understanding that her acceptance alone is wanting to fill up the measure of my wishes."

"Is it necessary that I should repeat that I am totally destitute of fortune—that the humble means I possess expire with me, and that I am as poor in influence as in all else?"

"I have sufficient for both, Sir, for all that moderate wishes can desire. Pray do not add a word upon the subject."

"I must be explicit, Mr. Linton, however wearisome to you the theme. You will pardon an old man's prolixity, in consideration for the motives which prompt it. We have absolutely nothing of our once powerful family, save the name and the escutcheon—mementos to remind us of our fall! They did, indeed, say, some time back, that our title to the estate afforded strong grounds for litigation—that there were points of considerable importance——"

"May I interrupt you, Sir?" said Linton, laying his hand on Corrigan's arm. "A subject so full of regrets to *you* can never be a pleasing topic to *me*. I am fully as rich as a man like myself could desire; and I trust to personal exertions for whatever I may wish to add in the way of ambition."

"And with good reason, Sir," said Corrigan, proudly. "There are no failures to those who unite honesty of purpose with fine abilities. I will not add a word. Go—speak to my granddaughter: I tell you frankly my best wishes go with you."

Linton smiled a look of deep gratitude, and moved towards the door.

"One second more," cried Corrigan, as the other laid his hand on the lock; "it may soon be, that, as a member of our family, you would have the right to express a will on the subject we have been talking of. I would

wish to say, that, as I have abandoned all desire to contest this question, I should equally expect the same line of conduct from you."

"Can you doubt it, Sir—or is it necessary that I should give my promise?"

"I hope and trust not. But having myself given a written pledge, under my own hand and seal, to Mr. Cashel, surrendering all right and title to this estate——"

"Who gave this?" said Linton, turning suddenly round, and relinquishing his hold upon the lock of the door. Who gave this?"

"I gave it."

"To whom?"

"To Mr. Cashel, in the presence of his agent."

"When?" exclaimed Linton, from whose pale features, now, intense agitation had banished all disguise. When did you give it?"

"Within a fortnight."

"And this document—this release, was formal and explicit?"

"Perfectly so. I knew enough of law to make it obligatory. I stated the conditions for which it was given—certain concessions that Mr. Cashel had lately granted me, respecting this small property."

Linton sat down, and covered his face with both hands. The trouble of his feelings had carried him far away from all thought of concealment, and of the part which so long he had been playing. Indeed, so insensible was he to every consideration save one, that he forgot Corrigan's presence—forgot where he was; and in the paroxysm of his baffled purpose, muttered half aloud broken curses upon the insane folly of the old man's act.

"I am compelled to remind you, Sir, that I am a listener," said Mr. Corrigan, whose face, suffused with a flush of anger, showed that the insulting remarks had been overheard by him.

"And this was done without advice or consultation with any one?" said Linton, not heeding the last remark, nor the look that accompanied it.

"I was free then, Sir, to speak my gratitude, as I now am to utter my indignation that you should dare to canvass *my* acts and question *my* motives, both of which are above your control."

Linton stared at him almost vacantly; his own thoughts, and not the old man's words, had possession of his mind. With a rapidity of computation, in which few were his equals, he ran over all the varying chances of success which had accompanied his game—the pains he had taken to avert all causes of failure—the unwearying attention he had given to every minute point and doubtful issue—and now, here, at the very last, came the ruin of all his plans, and wreck of all his hopes.

"You have said enough—more than enough, Sir—to show me how dis-

interested were the views in which you sought my granddaughter in marriage," said Corrigan, haughtily; "nor would it much surprise me, now, were I to discover that he who is so skilful a double-dealer, may be no less expert as a calumniator. I will beg you to leave my house this instant."

"Not so fast, Sir," said Linton, assuming a seat, and at once regaining that insolent composure for which he was noted; "I have not that generous warmth of character which is so conspicuous in *you*. I have never given Mr. Cashel a release of any obligation I possess upon him. This house is *mine*, Sir—mine by legal transfer and right; and it is *you* who are the intruder!"

The old man staggered backwards, and leaned against the wall—a clammy perspiration covered his face and forehead, and he seemed sick to the very death. It was some time before he could even utter a word; and then, as with clasped hands and uplifted eyes he spoke, the fervour of his words told that they were heart-spoken. "Thank God for this! but for it, and I had given my child to a scoundrel!"

"Scarcely polite, Sir, and, perhaps, scarcely politic," said Linton, with his treacherous half-smile. "It would be as well to bear in mind how we stand toward each other."

"As enemies, open and declared," cried Corrigan, fiercely.

"I should say as creditor and debtor," said Linton; "but probably we are speaking in synonyms. Now, Sir, a truce to this altercation, for which I have neither time nor taste. Tell me frankly, can you obtain repossession of this unlucky document which in an ill-starred moment you parted with? If you can, and will do so, I am willing to resume the position I occupied towards you half an hour ago. This is plain speaking, I am aware; but how much better than to bandy mock courtesies, in which neither of us have any faith! We are both men of the world—I, at least, have no shame in saying that I am such. Let us then be frank and business-like."

"You have at last filled up the measure of your insults, Sir," said Corrigan, fiercely; "you have dared to speak of me as of yourself."

"It is a compliment I have not paid a great many, notwithstanding," replied Linton, with a languid insolence of manner that contrasted strongly with the other's natural warmth; "and there are people in this world would accept it as a flattery; but once more I say, let us abandon this silly squabble. Will you, or will you not, accept my proposal? I am ready to purchase the wreck as she lies upon the rocks, wave-tossed and shattered. Is it not better to give me the chance of floating her, than see her go to pieces before your eyes, and drift piecemeal into the wide ocean?"

"Leave me, Sir—leave me!" was all the old man could utter.

"If I take you at your word," said Linton, rising, "remember that the

last gleam of hope for you departs when I close that door behind me. I warn you that I am little given to relenting."

"Insolent scoundrel!" cried Corrigan, carried away by indignation.

"Unhandsomely spoken, old gentleman; such words are ill-befitting grey hairs and palsied hands; but I forgive them. I repeat, however, my nature is not over-disposed to forgiveness. An injury with me is like a malady that leaves its mark behind it. The day may come when all your entreaties, aided even by the fair supplications of a more gentle penitent——"

"If you dare, Sir!" cried Corrigan, interrupting; and the insolence—schooled and practised in many a trial—quailed before the look and gesture of the old man.

"You shall have your choice, then," said Linton. "From henceforth you will have to confess that I am not a secret enemy." And so saying, he opened the sash which led into the garden and passed out, leaving Corrigan overcome by emotion and almost panic-stricken.

The deceptions which are practised on youth are seldom attended with lasting influence; but when they fall upon a heart chilled and saddened by age they are stunning in their effect, and seldom, or never, admit of relief.

## CHAPTER LIX.

### GIOVANNI UNMASKED.

Can sight and hearing—even touch, deceive?
Or, is this real?

PLAY.

PROBABLY, in all his varied life, Cashel had never passed a day less to his satisfaction than that spent at Drumcoologan. His mind, already tortured by anxieties, was certainly not relieved by the spectacle that presented itself to his eyes. The fearful condition of a neglected Irish property, where want, crime, disease, and destitution were combined, was now seen by him for the first time. There was one predominant expression on and over everything—"Despair." The almost roofless cabin—the scarce-clad children—the fevered father stretched upon his bed of clay—the starving mother, with a dying infant at her bosom—passed before him like the dreadful images of a dream. And then he was to hear from his agent, that these were evils for which no remedy existed; "there had always been fever in Ireland;" "dirt they were used to;" want of clothing had become

"natural" to them; falsehood was the first article of their creed; their poverty was only fictitious: this one, owned several cows; the other, had money in a savings bank; and so on. In fact, he had to hear that every estate had its plague-spot of bad characters, where crime and infamy found a refuge; and that it might be poor morality, but good policy, to admit of the custom.

Confused by contradictory statements, wearied by explanations, to understand which nothing short of a lifelong should have passed in studying the people—imposed upon by some, unjust towards others—he listened to interminable discussions without one gleam of enlightenment—and what is far worse, without one ray of hope; the only piece of satisfaction he derived from the visit being, that Hoare had consented to advance a sum of money upon mortgage of the property, which, in his secret soul, Cashel resolved should be a purchase, and not a mere loan. The object he had in view was to buy off Linton's claim upon the cottage; and having settled all his most pressing debts, to retire for some years to the Continent, till a sufficient sum should have accumulated to permit him to recommence his life as a country gentleman, in a manner and with views very different from what he had hitherto done. He hoped, by travel, to improve his mind and extend his knowledge; he trusted that, by observing the condition of the peasant in different countries of Europe, he might bring back with him certain suggestions applicable to his own tenantry; and, at all events, he determined that the resources of his large fortune should no longer be squandered in meaningless debauch, so long as real destitution and grinding misery lay at his very door. He made many a good and noble resolve, and, like most men in such cases, with youth on their side, he was impatient to begin to act upon them.

It was, then, with a feeling like that of a liberated prisoner, he heard from Mr. Kennyfeck, that although Mr. Hoare and himself had yet many preliminaries to arrange, which might detain them several hours longer, he might now return homeward to Tubbermore, where his company were doubtless in anxious expectation of his coming. There were two roads which led to Drumcoologan: one, was a species of carriage-road, by which they had come that morning; the other, was a mere bridle-path over the mountain, and though shorter in mileage, required fully as much time, if not more, to travel. Refusing the assistance of a guide, and preferring to be alone, he set out by himself, and on foot, to pursue the way homeward.

It was the afternoon of a sharp, clear winter's day, when the bracing air and the crisp atmosphere elevate the spirits, and make exercise the most pleasurable of stimulants; and as Cashel went along, he began to feel a return of that buoyancy of heart which had been so peculiarly his own in former days. The future, to which his hope already lent its bright colours,

was rapidly erasing the past, and in the confidence of his youth he was fashioning a hundred schemes of life to come.

The path along which he travelled lay between two bleak and barren mountains, and followed the course of a little rivulet for several miles. There was not a cabin to be seen; not a trace of vegetation brightened the dreary picture; not a sheep, nor even a goat, wandered over the wild expanse. It was a solitude the most perfect that could be conceived. Roland often halted to look around him, and each time his eye wandered to a lofty peak of rock on the very summit of the mountain, and where something stood which he fancied might be a human figure. Although gifted with strong power of vision, the great height prevented his feeling any degree of certainty; so that he abandoned the effort, and proceeded on his way for miles without again thinking on the subject. At last, as he was nearing the exit of the glen, he looked up once more: the cliff was now perceptible in its entire extent, and the figure was gone! He gave no further thought to the circumstance, but seeing that the day was declining fast, increased his speed, in order to reach the high road before night closed in. Scarcely had he proceeded thus more than half a mile, when he perceived, full in front of him, about a couple of hundred yards distant, a man seated upon a stone beside the pathway. Cashel had been too long a wanderer in the wild regions of the "Far West," not to regard each new comer as at least a possible enemy. His Prairie experience had taught him that men do not take their stand in lonely and unfrequented spots without an object; and so, without halting, which might have awakened suspicion in the other, he managed to slacken his pace somewhat, and thus gave himself more time for thought. He well knew that, in certain parts of Ireland, landlord murder had become frequent; and although he could not charge himself with any act which should point him out as a victim, his was not a mind to waste in casuistry the moments that should be devoted more practically. He was perfectly unarmed, and this consideration rendered him doubly cautious. The matter, however, had but few issues. To go back would be absurd; to halt where he was, still more so. There was nothing, then, for it but to advance; and he continued to do so, calmly and warily, till about twenty paces from the rock where the other sat, still and immovable. Then it was that, dropping on one knee, the stranger threw back a cloak that he wore, and took a deliberate aim at him.

The steady precision of the attitude was enough to show Cashel that the man was well versed in the use of fire-arms. The distance was short, also, and the chance of escape, consequently, the very smallest imaginable. Roland halted, and crossing his arms upon his breast, stood to receive the fire exactly as he would have done in a duel. The other never moved:

his dark eye glanced along the barrel without blinking, and his iron grasp held the weapon still pointed at Cashel's heart.

"Fire!" cried Roland, with the loud utterance he would have used in giving the word of command; and scarcely was it spoken when the rifle was flung to the earth, and, springing to his feet, a tall and muscular man advanced with an outstretched hand to meet him.

"Don't you know me yet, Roland?" cried a deep voice in Spanish; "not remember your comrade?"

"What!" exclaimed Cashel, as he rubbed his eyes and shook himself as if to ensure he was not dreaming. "This is surely impossible! you cannot be my old friend and shipmate Enrique!"

"What am I, my boy," cried the other, throwing his arms around him and embracing him in true Mexican fashion, "your own old comrade for many a year, who has sailed with you, fought with you, drunk with you, played with you, and swears now that he wishes for nothing but the old times over again."

"But how came you here? and when? By what chance did you discover me?" said Roland, as he clasped the other's hand in both his own.

"'Tis a long story, 'amigo mio,' but you shall have it all, one of these days."

"True; there will be time enough to tell it, for you shall not leave me, Enrique. I was longing for a face of an old comrade once again—one of the old *Esmeralda's*, with whom my happiest days were passed."

"I can well believe it," said Enrique; "and it was to see if wealth had not sapped your courage, as I know it has your high spirits, that I took aim at you, a while ago. Had you quailed, Roland, I almost think I could have pulled the trigger."

"And I had well deserved it, too," said Cashel, sternly. "But let us hasten forward. Enrique, I am longing to see an old friend beneath my roof—longing to see you seated opposite to me, and answering the hundred questions about old friends and times that are thronging to my mind."

"No, Roland, my way lies thither," said he, pointing towards the west; "I have been too long your guest already."

"How do you mean?" cried Roland, in amazement.

"Simply, that for seven weeks I have lived beneath your roof. The narrative is too long for a moment like this; but enough if I tell you that it was a plot of Maritaña's, who, had I not acceded to the notion, would have disguised herself and come hither, to watch and see with her own eyes how you played the great man. To save her from such a step, when all persuasion failed, I came here as the sailor Giovanni."

"You, Giovanni?"

"Ay, Roland, and if wealth had not blinded you so effectually, you had soon seen through the counterfeit. As Giovanni, I saw your daily life—the habits of your household—the sterling worth and fidelity of the men you made your friends; and let me tell you, Cashel, our old associates of the 'Villa de las Noches' were men of unblemished honour compared with those well-bred companions of your prosperity. Often and often have I been upon the brink of declaring myself, and then, have I held back, sometimes from a curiosity to see the game played out, sometimes anxious to know how far this course of treachery might be carried on without its awakening your suspicions. At length, I actually grew weary of seeing you the 'dupe.' I almost ceased to feel interest in one who could be imposed upon with such slender artifice. I forgot, Roland, that I was the looker-on, and not the player of the game. It was in this mood of mind I had half determined to leave your house, and suffer you to go down the stream as chance might pilot, when I discovered that treachery had taken a higher flight than I suspected; and that, not content with the slow breaching of your fortune by play and reckless waste, your utter ruin, your very beggary had been compassed!"

Cashel started back, and grasped the other's arm tightly, but never spoke.

"Are you still so infatuated as not to guess the traitor?" cried Enrique.

"You mean Linton?"

"I do."

"But are you certain of what you speak? or do you mistake the cunning devices of a subtle mind for the darker snares of downright treachery?"

"You shall hear," said Enrique. "Sit down here upon this stone. I have some hours before I sail. The vessel leaves Limerick to-morrow for Naples; and thither I am bound, for Maritana is there. No, no, my dear friend, you must not ask me to stay; I have remained longer than I ought; but I waited for the time when I might be able to recompense you for having thus played the spy upon your actions. Hear me out patiently now, for that hour is come."

As Cashel seated himself beside Enrique, it was only by a great effort he could compose himself to listen, when a hundred questions came thronging to his mind, and doubts and inquiries, of every possible kind, demanded explanation.

"I will not waste your time nor my own by dwelling upon your losses at play. I may one day or other amuse you, by showing how little chance our old Columbian friends would have had against these honourable and right honourable swindlers. That you should be the mark for artifice, is natural enough: but I have little patience with your blindness in not seeing it

From the first hour of your arrival here, Linton set a watch upon your doings. Phillis was his principal agent. But even upon him Linton had his spies—myself among the number. Ay, Roland, I was perhaps the only one he trusted! As I have said, Linton marked every step you took, heard all you said, read every letter that reached you. Every night it was his practice, at a certain hour when you repaired to the cottage, to enter your dressing-room by a secret door that led from the theatre; and then, at his leisure, he ransacked your papers, examined your correspondence, searched through all the documents which concerned your estate, possessing himself of information on every point of your circumstances. Nor was this all; he abstracted papers of value from amongst them, well knowing the carelessness of your habits, and with what little risk of detection his boldest darings were attended. I studied him long and closely. For a great while I could not detect the clue to his proceedings. I even at one time ascribed all to jealousy, for he *was* jealous of the favour by which Lady Kilgoff distinguished you. This, however, could not explain all I saw, for it was on the subject of your fortune his deepest interest was excited. At last came his first move, and the whole game disclosed itself before me. There lay upon your table for several days a deed concerning the cottage where the old gentleman resided with his daughter. This, Linton, to my surprise, did not take away, but simply contented himself by placing it in such a prominent position as would in all likelihood attract your notice. To no purpose, however; you would seem to have tossed it over, among other papers, without attention. He went a step further; he broke the seal, and left the enclosure half open. Still it lay unminded. The next night he carried it off, but you never missed it."

"Nor was it of any consequence," broke in Cashel. "It was never perfected, and had neither my signature nor my seal."

"Are you certain of that?" said Enrique, smiling dubiously.

"I could swear to it."

"Look here, then," said the other, as he drew forth a pocket-book, from the folds of which he took a heavy package, and opened it before Cashel. "Is that name, there--that signature, 'Roland Cashel,' yours?"

Cashel stared at the writing without speaking; his hands trembled as they held the paper, and his very frame shook with agitation.

"I never wrote it!" cried he, at last, with an effort almost convulsive.

"Yet, see if it be not witnessed; there are the names and addresses of two persons."

"It is a forgery; a clever one, I own, but still a forgery. I never signed that paper—never saw it till this instant."

"Well," said Enrique, slowly, "I scarcely expected so much of memory from you. It is true as you say, you never did sign it; but *I* did."

"You, Enrique?—you?" exclaimed Cashel.

"Yes, Roland. I accompanied Linton to Limerick at his request, dressed to personate *you*. We were met at the hotel by two persons summoned to witness this act of signature; of the meaning of which I, of course, appeared to know nothing—nor did I, indeed, till long afterwards, discover the real significance."

"And how came you by it eventually?"

"By imitating Linton's own proceedings. I saw that for security he placed it in an iron box, which he carried with him to Limerick, and which contained another document of apparently far greater value. This casket was long enough in my company on that morning to enable me to take a model of the key, by which I afterwards had another made, and by means of which I obtained possession of both these papers—for here is the other."

"And when did you take them?"

"About an hour ago. I saw that this drama was drawing to a finish. I knew that Linton's schemes were advancing more rapidly than I could follow; his increased confidence of manner proved to me his consciousness of strength, and yet I could neither unravel his cunning nor detect his artifice. Nothing then remained but to carry off these papers; and, as the hour of my own departure drew nigh, there was no time to lose. There they are both. I hope you will be a more careful depositary than you have been hitherto."

"And where is Linton?" cried Roland, his passionate eagerness for revenge mastering every other feeling.

"Still your guest. He dines and does the honours of your board to-day, as he did yesterday, and will to-morrow."

"Nay, by my oath, that he will never do more! The man is no coward, and he will not refuse me the *amende* I'll ask for."

"Were he on board, it is a loop and a leap I'd treat him to," said Enrique.

"So should I, perhaps," said Cashel, "but the circumstances change with the place. Here he shall have the privilege of the class he has belonged to and disgraced."

"Not a bit of it, Roland. He is an average member of the guild; the only difference being, with more than average ability. These fellows are all alike. Leave them, I say. Come and rough it with me in the Basque, where a gallant band are fighting for the true Sovereign; or let us have another dash in the Far West, where the chase is as the peril and glory of

war; or what say you to the East? a Circassian saddle and a scimitar would not be strange to us. Choose your own land, my boy, and let us meet this day month at Cadiz."

"But why leave me, Enrique? I never had more need of a true-hearted friend than now."

"No, I cannot stay; my last chance of seeing Maritaña depends on my reaching Naples at once; and as to your affair with Linton, it will be one of those things of etiquette, and measured distance, and hair-trigger, in which a rough sailor like myself would be out of place."

"And Maritaña—tell me of her. They said that Rica had come to England."

"Rica! He dared not set foot on shore here. The fellow has few countries open to him now: nor is it known where he is."

"And is she alone? Is Maritaña unprotected?"

"Alone, but not unprotected. The girl who has twice crossed the Cordilleras with a rifle on her shoulder, need scarcely fear the insults of the coward herd that would molest her."

"But how is she living? In what rank—among what associates?"

"I only know that she maintains a costly retinue at the 'Albergo Reale; that her equipages, her servants, her liveries, bespeak wealth without limit. She is a mystery to the city she inhabits. So much have I heard from others; from herself, a few lines reached me at Dieppe, begging me to see you, and—you will scarcely believe it—asking for a release from that bond of betrothal that passed between you—as if it could signify anything.'

"Was the freedom thus obtained to be used in your favour, Enrique?"

The other grew purple, and it was a few seconds before he could answer "No! that is over for ever. She has refused me as one so much below her, that the very thought of an alliance would be degradation. The sailor—the buccaneer—raise his eyes to her whom Princes seek in vain? I go now to say my last farewell: as long as there dwells upon my mind the slenderest chance of meeting her, so long will hope linger in my heart; not the high hope that spirits one to glorious enterprise, but that feverish anxiety that unnerves the courage and shakes the purpose. I cannot endure it any longer."

"Remain with me, then, for a day—for two at furthest—and we will go together to Naples."

"Do not ask me, Roland. Some accident—some one of those chances which befal each hour of life—might delay us; and then, I might never see her more. She is to leave Naples by the end of the month, but to go whither, or how, she will not tell. Promise me to follow. Let us meet there; and then, if the world has not a faster hold upon you than I deem it

has, we'll seek our fortune together in new lands. What say you? is it a bargain?"

"Agreed," said Roland. "I'll leave this within a week, without it be my fate to quit it never. Let us rendezvous at Naples, then; and fortune shall decide what after."

"How hundreds of things press upon my mind, all of which, when I am gone, will be remembered, but which now are confusedly mingled up together! What warnings I meant to have given you! what cautions! and now I can think of nothing."

"I have room for but one thought," said Cashel, sternly: "it is a debt which every hour unpaid increases by a tenfold interest."

"It need not weigh long upon your conscience. Linton wears the dress of a grandee of Spain to-night; but he'll conceal it from time to time beneath a plain brown domino with yellow cape. Do not mix with your company on arriving, but wait till about twelve o'clock in your room, and you'll hear him as he enters his own: then, without risk of disturbance, you can see him; or, if you like it better, send another to him. Should he be the man you suppose, the whole can be easily arranged by the light of morning."

"And so shall it be," said Cashel, in a deep low voice.

"If this life of luxury has not unsteadied your finger, I'd not take his place for half your fortune."

A short motion of the head from Cashel seemed to concur with this speech.

"How I wish you were to be with me, Enrique!" said he, after a silence of some minutes.

"So should I, Roland; but you will not need me: were there two to bring to reckoning, I'd stay, cost what it might. And here we say farewell." They had walked together, during this colloquy, to the high road, which on one side leads towards Tubbermore, and on the other to Limerick.

Cashel held his comrade's hand fast clasped in his own, without speaking. The sense of isolation had never struck him so forcibly as now that, having met an old and attached friend, he was about to part with him so suddenly. It appeared to darken his solitude into something more lonely still.

"I'd have thought that all this wealth had made you happier," said Enrique, as he gazed at the sorrow-struck features of his friend.

"Neither happier nor better," said Roland, mournfully.

"There! see yonder," cried Enrique, "where you see the lamps flashing; those are the carriages of your gay company. Remember that you are the host to-night; and so, good-by."

"Good-by, my old comrade."

"One word more," said Enrique. "Be not weak-hearted—trust none of them—they are false, every one: some from envy; some from treachery; some from that fickleness that they fancy to be knowledge of life; but all are alike. And so, till we meet again at Naples."

"At Naples," echoed Cashel; and, with head bent down, pursued his way homeward.

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## CHAPTER LX.

TIERNAY INTIMIDATED—THE ABSTRACTED DEEDS.

> Warmth may suit the gen'rous fool;
> The deeper knave must aye be cool.
>
> BELL.

RAPIDLY as carriage after carriage rolls up the broad approach to Tubbermore, the lamps flashing and glittering through the dark wood, we must beg of our reader to turn back a few hours in our history, and follow the steps of Mr. Linton, as, leaving the cottage, he turned towards the "Great House."

Probably, to a mind constituted like his, there could be no more poignant sense of sorrow and regret than that experienced in consequence of a sudden and irrepressible burst of passion. It was a great fault—the greatest he could commit. In justice to him, we will own it was of the very rarest in occurrence. His outbreaks of anger, like his moments of calm, were all studied beforehand; and nothing short of a catastrophe, unexpected and overwhelming, could have surprised him into the fatal excess of which his interview with Corrigan was an instance.

If repentance could have compensated for his sin, assuredly the offence might have been effaced from the tablet of his misdeeds. Never was sorrow more true, heartfelt, and cutting. He called none of his accustomed casuistry to aid him in softening down his fault; he saw it in all the breadth of its enormity, as a foul blot upon that system of deceit in which years of practice had made him so perfect. He felt compromised by himself; and possibly, to a cunning man, this is the bitterest of all self-reproaches.

Very little consideration was needed to show that, so far as Corrigan went, reconciliation was impossible. He knew the old man too well to have

a doubt upon that subject. What, then, was to be done? In which was the most profitable channel to turn the stream of coming events? Were Cashel a man of different mould, there would be no price too high to pay for that document which stood between him and his title to the estate. It was all the difference between rank and obscurity—between wealth and want—between the condition of an estated gentleman and the assumption of a mere pretender. Wide as the alternatives lay, Linton knew they would not affect Cashel's mind. He foresaw clearly that, in a burst of his "most virtuous probity," he would declare Corrigan the rightful owner of the estate, and walk forth into the world as poor as when he began it. With Cashel, therefore, all treaty would be impossible. The next consideration was, what terms might be made with Corrigan through Tiernay. The rough frankness of the old Doctor had always been reckoned by Linton as a common-place trick of certain coarse minds, to simulate honesty and straightforwardness. He believed that mankind consisted of but two categories—the knave and the fool: he who was not one, must necessarily be the other. Now, an acute study of Tiernay persuaded him that he was a shrewd, sound-headed man, whose very profession had trained him into habits of investigation; and thought there could be little doubt, therefore, into which class he fell. There was, moreover, this advantage in treating with him, that neither personal feeling nor pride of station would interfere with the negotiation; he would entertain the question in the simple light of a bargain—so much for so much. The unluckly release of all claim upon their property was, of course, to be thought of—as deteriorating, if not altogether invalidating, the title; but of this it might be possible, perhaps, to obtain possession. Cashel's papers must be ransacked throughout; it was very unlikely that he had taken an unusual care of it, so that Linton was far from supposing that this would present a serious difficulty But why had he not thought of this before? Why had he suffered his disappointment to blind him to what was so palpable? "So much for thinking the game won ere it is finished," exclaimed he; "but who would have thought Linton should make this blunder?"

To treat with Tiernay, then, realised every advantage he could think of. It offered the prospect of better terms, an easier negotiation; and it presented one feature of inestimable merit in his eyes—it afforded the means of gratifying his hatred against Cashel, without the vengeance costing him anything. This thought, for a while, left him incapable of entertaining every other. Cashel reduced to poverty—humiliated to the position of an adventurer who had obtained a property under false pretences—was a picture he could never weary of contemplating. What a glorious consumma-

tion of revenge, could he have involved one other in the ruin!—if Laura had been the companion of his fall! But that scheme had failed: a friendship—a perilous one, 'tis true—had sprung up where Linton had sowed the seeds of a very different passion; and nothing remained but to involve them both in the disgrace and ruin which a separation and its consequences could inflict. "Even this," thought he, "will now be no trifling penalty—the 'millionnaire' Roland Cashel would have conferred an *éclat* on the fall, that would become ludicrous when associated with the name of a mere adventurer."

If thoughts of these vengeances afforded the most intense pleasure to his vindictive mind, there came, ever and anon, deep regrets at the loss of that greater game for which he had planned and plotted so anxiously. That noble fortune which he had almost held within his grasp—that high station from which he would have known how to derive all its advantages—the political position he had so long ambitioned—were now all to flit from before his eyes like the forms of a dream, unreal and impossible.

So intently had he pursued these various reasonings, that he utterly forgot everything of his late interview with Tom Keane; and when the remembrance did flash upon him, the effect was almost stunning. The crime would now be useless, so far as regarded Linton's own advantage. Mary Leicester could never be his wife: why, then, involve himself, however remotely, in a deed as profitless as it was perilous? No time should be lost about this. He must see Keane immediately, and dissuade him from the attempt. It would be easy to assure him that the whole was a misconception—a mistake of meaning. It was not necessary to convince—it was enough to avert the act; but this must be done at once.

So reflecting, Linton took his way to the gate-lodge, which lay a considerable distance off. The space afforded much time for thought, and he was one whose thoughts travelled fast. His plans were all matured and easy of accomplishment. After seeing Keane, he would address a few lines to Tiernay, requesting an interview on the following morning. That night, he resolved, should be his last at Tubbermore; the masquerade had, as may be conjectured, few charms for one whose mind was charged with heavier cares, but still it would give him an occasion to whisper about his scandal on Lady Kilgoff, and, later on, give him the opportunity of searching Cashel's papers for that document he wished to obtain.

On reaching the gate-lodge, under pretence of lighting his cigar he entered the house, where, in all the squalid misery of their untractable habits, Keane's wife sat, surrounded by her ragged children.

"Tom is at work, I suppose?" said he, carelessly.

"No, yer Honer; he went out early this morning to look after a little place for us, as the master is goin' to turn us out."

"I'm sorry for that," said he, compassionately; "land is dear, and hard to be got now-a-days. Why don't he go to America?"

"Indeed an' I don't know, Sir. They say it's the asy place to gain a livin'; fine pay, and little to do for it."

Linton smiled at an encomium for whose accuracy he would not have vouched; and then tried to ascertain, in the same careless fashion, in what direction Keane had gone; but the woman could not tell. She believed it was by the high road, but could not be certain, since he had left the house shortly after daybreak.

Linton sauntered out in deep thought. It was evident enough to him what the object of that journey was: it needed no clue to track his path. It was strange; but now, when the deed was not to secure any future benefits to himself, it appeared before his eyes in all the glaring colours of its criminality. It was a cold-blooded and useless crime, and he actually shuddered as he thought upon it.

Although he well knew that it would not be possible to connect him in any way with the act, his conscience made him restless and uneasy, and he would have given much that he had never mooted it. It was too late, however, now, to think of these things; were he to mount his horse and follow the fellow Keane, the chances of coming up with him were few. The man would inevitably have concealed himself till the very moment came; and were Linton to be present at such a time, the fact of his presence might, in such a remote and unfrequented spot, give rise to the very worst suspicions. "Be it so," said he at length, and with the tone of one who left the issue to fortune. He found himself now upon the high road, and remembering that he was not far from Tiernay's house, resolved on making a visit to the Doctor in person. It might so happen hereafter that a question would arise where he had passed the morning. There was no saying what turn events might take, and it would be as well were he able to show that he had spent some time in Tiernay's company; and as, in such a critical moment, it would have been far from wise to discuss any matter connected with Cashel's property, it were safest to make the object of the visit appear an effort to obtain Doctor Tiernay's kind mediation in the difference with Mr. Corrigan.

To pass half an hour in his company, under any pretext, would be to put on record his occupation on that morning; and, with this resolve, he knocked at the door.

It was with a start of surprise Tiernay received Linton as he entered his

study. The Doctor arose from the chair where he had been sitting, and stood in the attitude of one who desires by his very air and deportment to express that he does not mean that the other should be seated.

"This is an honour, Sir," said he, at last, "so undeserved on my part, that I am at a loss how to acknowledge it."

"A little patience and a little courtesy are all I ask for, Dr. Tiernay," replied Linton, while he placed a chair and seated himself with the most perfect unconcern. "You may easily guess that I do not intrude my presence upon you without what at least seem to me to be sufficient reasons. Whether you may think them so or not, will in a great measure depend upon whether you prefer to be guided by the false lights of an unjust prejudice, or the true illumination of your own natural good sense and practical intelligence."

Tiernay sat down without speaking; the appeal was made calmly and dispassionately to him, and he felt that he could not but entertain it, particularly as the scene was beneath his own roof.

Linton resumed:

"*Your* friend—I hope the time is not distant when I may be enabled to say and *mine*—Mr. Corrigan, acting under the greatest of all misconceptions, mistaking my heartfelt zeal in his behalf for an undue interference in his affairs, has to-day expressed himself towards me in a manner so uncalled for, so unfair, and ungenerous, that, considering the position I sought to occupy in his regard, either bespeaks the existence of some secret attack upon my character, or that a mere sudden caprice of temper overbalances with him the qualities he has been gracious enough to speak of in terms of praise and approbation."

Tiernay gave a short, dry nod, whose significance was so very doubtful that Linton stopped and stared at him, as if asking for further information.

"I had made a proposition for the hand of his granddaughter," resumed he, "and surely my pretensions could not subject me to rebuke?"

Tiernay nodded again, in the same puzzling way as before.

"Knowing the influence you possess in the family," resumed Linton, "seeing how much confidence they repose in your counsels, I have thought it advisable to state to you that, although naturally indignant at the treatment I have met with, and possibly carried away for a moment by passion, my feelings regarding Miss Leicester are unchanged, and, I believe, unchangeable."

Tiernay moved his head slightly, as though implying assent.

"Am I to understand, Sir, that my communication is pleasing to you?" said Linton, firmly.

"Very pleasing in every respect," said Tiernay.

"And I may reckon upon your kind offices in my behalf, Dr. Tiernay?"

Tiernay shook his head negatively.

"Be kind enough to speak your mind more intelligibly, Sir, for there is need that we should understand each other here."

"I will be as explicit as you can desire, Sir. Your communication was gratifying to me in so far that it showed me how my old and esteemed friend Mr. Corrigan had thrown off the delusion in which he had indulged regarding you, and saw you as I have always thought you—a clever worldly man, without scruples as to his means when an object had once gained possession of his wishes, and who never could have dreamed of making Miss Leicester his wife were there not other and deeper purposes to be attained by so doing."

"You are candour itself, Sir," said Linton; "but I cannot feel offence at a frankness I have myself asked for. Pray extend the favour, and say what could possibly be these other and deeper purposes you allude to? What advantages could I propose myself by such an alliance, save increased facilities of conversation with Dr. Tiernay, and more frequent opportunities of indulging in 'tric-trac' with Mr. Corrigan?"

Tiernay winced under the sarcasm, but only said,

"To divine your motives would be to become your equal in skill and cleverness. I have no pretensions to such excellence."

"So that you are satisfied with attributing to another objects for which you see no reason and motive, and of which you perceive no drift?"

"I am satisfied to believe in much that I cannot fathom."

"We will pursue this no further," said Linton, impatiently. "Let us reverse the medal. Mr. Corrigan's refusal of me, coupled with his uncourteous conduct, may lead to unpleasant results. Is he prepared for such?"

"I have never known him to shrink from the consequences of his own conduct," replied Tiernay, steadfastly.

"Even though that conduct should leave him houseless?" whispered Linton.

"It cannot, Sir, while *I* have a roof."

"Generously spoken, Sir," said Linton, while he threw his eyes over the humble decorations of his chamber with an expression of contempt there was no mistaking.

"Humble and poor enough it is, Sir," said Tiernay, answering the glance, "but the fruit of honest industry. Neither a father's curse, nor a mother's tear, hovers over one of the little comforts around me."

"An ancient Roman in virtue!" exclaimed Linton, affectedly. "How sad, that our degenerate days so ill reward such excellence!"

"You are wrong there, Sir. Even for merits poor and unobtrusive as mine, there are tributes of affection more costly than great men know of. There are those on every hand around me who would resign health, and hope, and life itself, to do me service. There are some who, in their rude zeal, would think little of making even Mr. Linton regret his having needlessly insulted me. Ay, Sir, I have but to open that window and speak one word, and you would sorely repent this day's proceeding."

Linton sat calm and collected under this burst of anger, as though he were actually enjoying the outbreak he had provoked. "You have a lawless population here, it would seem, then," said he, smiling blandly, as he rose from his seat. "I think the Government is badly rewarded by bestowing its resources on such a neighbourhood. A police-barracks would suit you better than an hospital, and so I shall tell Mr. Downie Meek."

Tiernay grew suddenly pale. The threat was too palpable to be mistaken, nor was he sufficiently conversant with the world of policy to detect its fallacy.

"Two hundred pounds a year," resumed Linton, "can be of no moment to one who is surrounded by such generous devotion, while some respect for law or order will be a good 'alternative,'—isn't that the phrase, Doctor?"

Tiernay could not utter a word. Like many men who pass their lives in seclusion, he had formed the most exaggerated ideas of the despotism of those in power; he believed that for the gratification of a mere whim or passing caprice they would not scruple at an act of oppression that might lead to ruin itself; he felt shocked at the peril to which a hasty word had exposed him. Linton read him like a book, and gazing fixedly at him, said, "Your craft has taught you little of worldly skill, Dr. Tiernay, or you would have seen that it is better to incur a passing inconvenience, than run the risk of a severe and perhaps fatal misfortune. Methinks that a science of expediencies might have instilled a few of its wise precepts into every-day life."

The Doctor stared, half in astonishment, half in anger, but never spoke.

"Reflect a little upon this point," said Linton, slowly; "remember, too, that a man like myself, who never acts without an object, may be a very good associate for him who has neither courage nor energy for action at all; and lastly, bethink you that the subtlety and skill which can make a useful friend, can become very readily the materials of a dangerous enemy."

Linton knew well the force and significance of vagueness, either in threat or promise; and no sooner had he done speaking than he left the room and

the house; while Tiernay, bewildered and terrified, sat down to think over what had passed.

"He'll come to terms, I see that!" cried Linton to himself, as he entered the park of Tubbermore. "A little time—a sleepless night or two—the uncertainty of that future, which to every man past fifty gets another tinge of black with each year—will do the business, and I'll have him suing for the conditions he would now reject."

Never yet, however, had time been a greater object with Linton. The host of creditors whom he had staved off for some months back—some, by paying large sums on account; others, by the assurance that he was on the eve of a rich marriage—would, at the very first semblance of his defeat, return and overwhelm him. Many of his debts were incurred to hush up play transactions, which, if once made public, his station in society would be no longer tenable. Of his former associates, more than one lived upon him by the mere menace of the past. Some were impatient, too, at the protracted game he played with Roland, and reproached him with not "finishing him off" long before, by cards and the dice-box. Others, were indignant that they were not admitted to the share of the spoil, with all the contingent advantages of mixing in a class where they might have found the most profitable acquaintances. To hold all these in check had been a difficult matter, and few save himself could have accomplished it. To restrain them much longer was impossible. With these thoughts he walked along, scarce noticing the long string of carriages which now filled the avenue, and hastened towards the house. Occasionally a thought would cross his mind, "What if the bullet had already done its work? What if that vast estate were now once more thrown upon the wide ocean of litigation? Would Corrigan prefer his claim again, or would some new suitor spring up? and if so, what sum could recompense the possession of that pardon by which the whole property might be restored to its ancient owners?" Amid all these canvassings, no feeling arose for the fate of him who had treated him as a bosom friend—not one regret, not so much as one sensation of pity. True, indeed, he did reflect upon what course to adopt when the tidings arrived. Long did he vacillate whether Tom Keane should not be arrested on suspicion. There were difficulties in either course, and, as usual, he preferred that coming events should suggest their own conduct.

At last he reached the great house, but instead of entering by the front door, he passed into the court-yard, and gained his own apartment unobserved. As he entered he locked the door, and placed the key in such a manner that none could peep through the keyhole. He then walked leisurely around the room; and although he knew there was no other outlet, he cast a glance of scrutinising import on every side, as if to ensure

himself that he was alone. This done, he opened a small cupboard in the wall behind his bed, and took forth the iron box, in which, since its discovery, he had always kept the pardon, as well as the forged conveyance of Tubber-beg.

Linton placed the box before him on the table, and gazed at it in a kind of rapture. "There," thought he, "lies the weapon by which at once I achieve both fortune and revenge. Let events take what turn they will, *there*, is a certain source of wealth. A great estate like this will have its claimants: with me it rests who shall be the successful one."

A hurried knocking at the door interrupted the current of these musings; and Linton, having replaced the casket in the press, unlocked the door. It was Mr. Phillis, who, in all the gala of full dress, and with a rare camelia in his button-hole, entered.

"Well, Phillis, is all going on as it ought?" said Linton, carelessly.

"Scarcely so, Sir," said the soft-voiced functionary; "the house is filling fast, but there is no one to receive the company; and they are walking about staring at each other, and asking who is to do the honours."

"Awkward, certainly," said Linton, coolly; "Lady Kilgoff ought to have been the person."

"She is gone, Sir," said Phillis.

"Gone! gone! When, and where?"

"I cannot say, Sir; but my Lord and her Ladyship left this morning early, with post-horses, taking the Dublin road."

Linton did not speak, but the swollen vein in his forehead, and the red flush upon his brow, told how the tidings affected him. He had long speculated on witnessing the agonies of her grief when the hour of his revenge drew nigh; and this ecstasy of cruelty was now to be denied him.

"And my Lord—had he regained any consciousness? or was he still insensible?"

"He appeared like a child, Sir, when they lifted him into the carriage."

"And Lady Kilgoff?"

"She held her veil doubled over her face as she passed; but I thought she sighed, and even sobbed, as she handed me this letter."

"'For Roland Cashel, Esquire,'" said Linton, reading as he took it. "Did she speak at all, Phillis?"

"Not a word, Sir. It was a sad-looking procession altogether, moving away in the dim grey of the morning."

Linton placed the letter in a rack upon the chimney, and for some seconds was lost in thought.

"If Lady Janet, Sir, would be kind enough to receive the company," murmured Phillis, softly.

"Pooh, man, it is of no consequence!" said Linton, roughly, his mind dwelling on a very different theme. "Let who will play host or hostess."

"Perhaps you would come down yourself soon, Sir?" asked Phillis, who read in the impatience of Linton's manner the desire to be alone, and coupled that desire with some mysterious purpose.

"Yes, leave me, Phillis; I'm going to dress," said he, hurriedly. "Has *he* returned yet?"

"No, Sir; and we expected him at five o'clock."

"And it is now nine," said the other, solemnly; "four hours later."

"It is very singular!" exclaimed Phillis, who was more struck by the altered expression of Linton's face than by the common-place fact he affected to marvel at.

"Why singular? What is remarkable? That a man should be delayed some time on a business matter, particularly when there was no urgency to repair elsewhere?"

"Nothing more common, Sir; only that Mr. Cashel said positively he should be here at five. He had ordered the cob pony to be ready for him—a sign that he was going to pay a visit at the cottage."

Linton made no reply, but his lips curled into a smile of dark and ominous meaning.

"Leave me, Phillis," said he, at length; "I shall be late, with all this cumbrous finery I am to wear."

"Shall I send your man, Sir?" said Phillis, slyly eyeing him as he spoke.

"Yes—no, Phillis—not yet. I'll ring for him later."

And with these words Linton seated himself in a large chair, apparently unconscious of the other's presence.

Mr. Phillis withdrew noiselessly—but not far—for after advancing a few steps along the corridor, he cautiously returned, and listened at the door.

Linton sat for a few seconds, as if listening to the other's retreating footsteps; and then, noiselessly arising from his chair, he approached the door of the chamber, at which, with bent-down head, Phillis watched. With a sudden jerk of the handle Linton threw open the door, and stood before the terrified menial.

"I was afraid you were ill, Sir. I thought your manner was strange."

"Not half so strange as this conduct, Mr. Phillis," said Linton, slowly, as he folded his arms composedly on his breast. "Come in." He pointed, as he spoke, to the room; but Phillis seemed reluctant to enter, and made a gesture of excuse. "Come in, Sir," said Linton, peremptorily; and he obeyed. Linton immediately locked the door, and placed the key upon the chimney-piece; then deliberately seating himself full in front of the other, he stared at him long and fixedly. "So, Sir," said he, at length, "you have

thought fit to become a spy upon my actions. Now, there is but one *amends* you can make for such treachery; which is, to confess frankly and openly what it is you want to know, and what small mystery is puzzling your puny intelligence, and making your nights sleepless. Tell me this candidly, and I'll answer as freely."

"I have really nothing to confess, Sir. I was fearful lest you were unwell. I thought—it was mere fancy, perhaps—that you were flurried and peculiar this morning; and this impression distressed me so, that—that——"

"That you deemed fit to watch me. Be is so. I have few secrets from any one—I have none from my friends. You shall hear, therefore, what—without my knowing it—has made me appear unusually agitated. It was my intention to leave this house to-morrow, Phillis, and in the preparation for my departure I was arranging my letters and papers, among which I found a very considerable quantity that prudence would consign to the flames—that is to say, if prudence were to be one-sided, and had only regard for the interests of one individual where there were two concerned. In plain language, Phillis, I was just about to burn the mass of documents which fill that iron safe, and which it were to the honour and credit of Mr. Phillis should be reduced to charcoal as speedily as may be, the same being nothing more nor less than the accounts of that 'honest steward,' pinned to the real and *bonâ fide* bills of Mr. Cashel's tradespeople. There are, it is true, strange little discrepancies between the two, doubtless capable of satisfactory explanation, but which, to plain-thinking men like myself, are difficult to reconcile; and in some one or two instances—a wine merchant's account, for example, and a saddler's bill—savour somewhat of that indiscreet procedure people call forgery. What a mistake—what an inadvertence, Phillis!"

There was something of almost coaxing familiarity in the way Linton uttered the last words; and Phillis grew sick at heart as he listened to them.

"A moment more, an instant later, and I had thrown them into the fire; but your footsteps, as you walked away, sounded too purpose-like; you were so palpably honest, that I began to suspect you. Eh, Phillis, was I right?"

Phillis essayed a smile, but his features only accomplished a ghastly grin.

"I will keep them, therefore, where they are," said Linton. "These impulses of rash generosity are very costly pleasures; and there is no such good practical economy as to husband one's confidence."

"I'm sure, Sir, I never thought I should have seen the day——"

"Go on, man; don't falter. What day do you mean? that on which you had attempted to outwit *me?* or, that on which I should show you all the peril of your attempting it? Ay, and there is peril, Mr. Phillis: a felony whose punishment is transportation for life, is no small offence."

"Oh, Sir!—oh, Mr. Linton! forgive me," cried the other, in the most abject voice. "I always believed that my devotion to your interests would claim your protection."

"I never promised to further anything that was base or dishonest," said Linton, with an air of assumed morality.

"You opened and read letters that were addressed to another; you spied his actions, and kept watch upon all his doings; you wrote letters in his name, and became possessed of every secret of his life by treachery; you——"

"Don't talk so loud, Phillis; say all you have to say to *me*."

"Oh dear, Sir, forgive me the burst of passion. I never meant it. My temper carried me away in spite of me." And he burst into tears as he spoke.

"What a dangerous temper, that may at any moment make a felon of its owner! Go, Phillis, there is no need of more between us. You know *me*. I almost persuaded myself that I knew you. But if I know anything, it is this"—here he approached, and laid his hand solemnly on the other's shoulder—"that I would make hell itself the punishment of him who injured me, were I even to share it with him."

Phillis's knees smote each other with terror at the look that accompanied these words; they were spoken without passion or vehemence, but there was that in their tone that thrilled to his inmost heart. Powerless, and overcome by his emotions, he could not stir from the spot: he wanted to make explanations and excuses, but all his ingenuity deserted him; he tried to utter vows of attachment and fidelity, but shame was too strong for him there also. He would have resorted to menace itself rather than remain silent, but he had no courage for such a hazardous course. Linton appeared to read in turn each change of mood that passed across the other's mind; and, after waiting as it were to enjoy the confusion under which he suffered, said:

"Just so, Phillis; it is a sad scrape you fell into; but when a man becomes bankrupt either in fame or fortune, it is but loss of time to bewail the past; the wiser course is to start in business again, and make a character by a good dividend. Try that plan. Good-by!"

These words were a command; and so Phillis understood them, as, with an humble bow, he left the room. Linton again locked the door, and draw-

ing the table to a part of the room from which no eavesdropper at the door could detect it, he once more sat down at it. His late scene with Phillis had left no traces upon his memory; such events were too insignificant to claim any notice beyond the few minutes they occupied; his thoughts were now upon the greater game, where all his fortune in life was staked. He took out the key, which he always wore round his neck, and placed it in the lock: at the same instant the clock on the chimney-piece struck ten. He sat still, listening to the strokes; and when they ceased, he muttered, "Ay, mayhap cold enough ere this!" A slight shuddering shook him as he uttered these words, and a dreamy reverie seemed to gather around him; but he arose, and walking to the window, opened it. The fresh breeze of the night rallied him almost at once, and he closed the sash and returned to his place.

"To think that I should hold within my hands the destinies of those whom most of all the world I hate!" muttered he, as he turned the key and threw back the lid. The box was empty! With a wild cry, like the accent of intense bodily pain, he sprang up and dashed both hands into the vacant space, and then held them up before his eyes, like one who could not credit the evidence of his own senses. The moment was a terrible one, and for a few seconds the staring eyeballs and quivering lips seemed to threaten the access of a fit; but reason at last assumed the mastery, and he sat down before the table and leaned his head upon it to think. Twice before in life had it been his lot to lose a whole fortune at one turn of the die, but never before had he staked all the revengeful feelings of his bad heart, which, baffled in their flow, now came back upon himself.

He sat thus for nigh an hour; and when he arose at last, his features were worn as though by a long illness; and as he moved his fingers through his hair, it came away in masses, like that of a man after fever.

## CHAPTER LXI.

### AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE DUPE AND HIS VICTIM.

So, then, we meet at last.—HAROLD.

As the rooms began to fill with company, costumed in every variety that taste, fancy, or absurdity could devise, many were surprised that neither was there a host to bid them welcome, nor was there any lady to perform the accustomed honours of reception. The nature of the entertainment, to a certain extent, took off from the awkwardness of this want. In a masquerade, people either go to assume a part, or to be amused by the representation of others, and are less dependent on the attentions of the master or mistress of the house; so that, however struck at first by the singularity of a *fête* without the presence of the giver, pleasure, ministered to by its thousand appliances, overcame this feeling, and few ever thought more of him beneath whose roof they were assembled.

The rooms were splendid in their decoration, lighted "*a giorno*," and ornamented with flowers of the very rarest kind. The music consisted of a celebrated orchestra and a regimental band, who played alternately; the guests, several hundred in number, were all attired in fancy costumes, in which every age and nation found its type; while characters from well-known fictions abounded, many of them admirably sustained, and dressed with a pomp and splendour that told the wealth of the wearers.

It was truly a brilliant scene; brilliant as beauty, and the glitter of gems, and waving of plumes, and splendour of dress could make it. The magic impulse of pleasure communicated by the crash of music—the brilliant glare of wax-lights—the throng—the voices—the very atmosphere, tremulous with sounds of joy, seemed to urge on all there to give themselves up to enjoyment. There was a boundless, lavish air, too, in all the arrangements. Servants in gorgeous liveries served refreshments of the most exquisite kind. Little children, dressed as pages, distributed bouquets, bound round with lace of Valenciennes or Brussels, and occasionally fastened by strings of garnets or pearls. A *jet d'eau* of rose-water cooled the air of the conservatory, and diffused its delicious freshness through the atmosphere. There was something princely in the scale of the hospitality; and from every tongue words of praise and wonder dropped at each moment.

Even Lady Janet, whose enthusiasm seldom rose much above the zero, confessed that it was a magnificent *fête;* adding, by way of compensation for her eulogy, "and worthy of better company."

Mrs. White was in ecstasies with everything, even to the cherubs in pink gauze wings who handed round sherbet, and whom she pronounced quite "classical." The Kennyfecks were in the seventh heaven of delight; affecting little airs of authority to the servants, and showing the strangers, by a hundred little devices, that all the magnificence around was no new thing to *them.* Miss Kennyfeck, as the Queen of Madagascar, was a most beautiful savage; while Olivia appeared as the fair "Gabrielle"—a sly intimation to Sir Harvey, whose dress, as Henri IV., won universal admiration. Then there were the ordinary number of Turks, Jews, Sailors, Circassians, Greeks, Highland Chiefs, and Indian Jugglers; "Jim" figuring as a Newmarket "Jock," to the unbounded delight and wonderment of every "Sub" in the room.

If in many quarters the question ran, "Where is Mr. Cashel?" or, "Which is he?" Lady Janet had despatched Sir Andrew, attired as a "Moonshee," to find out Linton for her. "He is certain to know every one here: tell him to come to me at once," said she, sitting down near a doorway to watch the company.

While Lady Janet is waiting for him—who, better than any other, could explain the mysterious meaning of many a veiled figure, unravel the hidden wickedness of every chance allusion, or expound the secret malice of each calembourg or jest—let us track his wanderings, and follow him as he goes.

Throwing a large cloak over his brilliant dress, Linton made his way by many a by-stair and obscure passage to the back of the theatre, by which the secret approach led to Cashel's dressing-room. Often as he had trod that way before, never had he done so in the same state of intense excitement. With the loss of the papers, he saw before him not alone the defeat of every hope he nurtured, but discovery, shame, and ruin! He whose whole game in life was to wield power over others, now saw himself in the grasp of some one, to whom he had not the slightest clue. At one moment his suspicions pointed to Cashel himself, then to Tiernay, and lastly to Phillis. Possibly rage has no bitterer moment than that in which an habitual deceiver of others first finds himself in the toils of treachery. There was over his mind, besides, that superstitious terror, that to unbelieving intellects stands in place of religion, which told him that luck had turned with him; that fortune, so long favourable, had changed at last; and that, in his own phrase, "the run had set in against him." Now, a half-muttered curse would burst from his lips over the foolhardiness that had made him so dilatory, and not suffered him to reap the harvest when it was ripe; now,

a deep-breathed vow, that if fate were propitious once again, no matter how short the interval, he would strike his blow, come what might of it. Sometimes he blamed himself for having deserted the safe and easy road to ruin by play, for the ambitious course he had followed; at other times he inveighed against his folly for not carrying off Mary Leicester before Cashel had acquired any intimacy at the cottage. Burning and half-maddened with this conflict of regrets and hopes, he touched the spring, moved back the panel, and entered Cashel's room.

His first care was to see that the door from the corridor was secured on the inside; his next, to close the shutters and draw the curtains. These done, he lighted the candles on the table, and proceeded to make a systematic search through the entire chamber. "It is my last visit here," said he to himself; "I must take care to do my work cleanly." A mass of papers had been that morning left behind him by Cashel, most of them legal documents referring to his transactions with Hoare; but some were memoranda of his intentions respecting Corrigan, and plainly showing that Cashel well remembered he had never completed his assignment to Linton. "If Keane's hand has not faltered," muttered he, "Master Roland's memory will not be taxed in this world at least; but where to discover the deed? that is the question." In his anxiety on this head, he ransacked drawers and cabinets with wild and furious haste, strewing their contents around him, or wantonly throwing them on the fire. With false keys for every lock, he opened the most secret depositories—scarce glancing at letters which at any other time he had devoured with interest. Many were from Lady Kilgoff, warning Cashel against him; his own name, seen passingly, would arrest his attention for a second, but the weightier interest soon intervened, and he would throw the papers from him with contempt. "How shrewd! how very cunning!" muttered he, once or twice, as his glance caught some suspicion, some assumed clue to his own motives, in her well-known handwriting. Baffled by the unsuccessful result of his search, he stood in the midst of the floor, surrounded by open boxes, the contents of which were strewn on every side; rage and disappointment were depicted in his features; and, as his clenched hand struck the table, his whole expression became demoniac. Curses and deep blasphemies fell from his half-moving lips, as he stood insensible to everything save the wreck of his long-cherished hope.

Let us turn from him to another, in whose fortunes we are more interested. Roland Cashel, after parting with Enrique, hastened on towards Tubbermore; his thoughts engaged on every topic save that which might be supposed to occupy the mind of a host at such a time. Pleasure

assuredly held a weaker hold upon him than the thirst for vengeance, and the ardent longing to throw off the thraldom of that servitude he had endured too long.

It was only by observing the long string of carriages, whose lamps flashed and disappeared at intervals among the trees, that he remembered anything of the *fête*, and bethought him of that character of entertainer he, at the moment, should have been performing. There seemed to him a terrible inconsistency between his own thoughts and that scene of pleasure!—between the object in pursuit of which so many were hastening with furious speed, and that to which his slower steps were leading him!

"There can be but one *amende* for such infamous conduct," muttered he; "he shall pay it with his life's blood." And as he spoke, he opened the documents which Enrique had given him, and endeavoured to read them: the dusky shadows of the fast-falling night prevented him, and he stood for some minutes lost in thought.

One of the papers, he was aware, bore the forged signature of his name; the other, whose antique form and massive seal bespoke an importance far greater, he tried again and again to decipher, but in vain. As he was thus occupied, he chanced to look up, and suddenly perceived that a stream of light issued from beneath the shutters of his own dressing-room, the door of which he had himself locked at his departure, taking the key along with him. Enrique's words flashed across his memory at once. It was Linton was there! "At his old work again," muttered he, in deep anger; "but it shall be for the last time." A moment of coming peril was all that Cashel needed to elicit the resources of his character. The courage tried in many a danger supplied him with a calm foresight, which the ordinary occasions of life rarely or never called forth. He bethought him that it were best at such a conjuncture to deposit the sealed document in some place of safety ere he went forth upon an enterprise the result of which must be doubtful: for all purposes of confronting Linton it were sufficient to take the forged deed along with him. These were conclusions formed as rapidly as they occurred, and acted upon no less speedily; for, folding up the parchment, he inserted it into a cleft in an aged elm-tree, noting well the spot, and marking all the signs by which he would be able to return to it. His next thought was, how to reach his chamber: to enter the house at such a time undiscovered, was of course out of the question; he would be seen and recognised at once, and then there would be an end for ever of all the secrecy by which he hoped to cover the proceedings with Linton.

It neither suited his inclinations nor his plans that the world should be a party to his vengeance. "Let them discover it when it is over," said he "but let them not be able to interfere with its course." All approach to

his dressing-room through the house being thus impracticable, nothing remained but to reach it from without. The chamber was in the second story of the building, at a great height from the ground; but the walls were here covered with thick ivy of ancient growth, and by this Cashel resolved to make the attempt.

The act was not devoid of danger; but there are times when peril is a relief to the mad conflict of thought, and this was such a moment to Cashel. In an instant he made himself ready for the attempt, and with an activity that many a danger had tested, began the ascent. There are occasions when rashness is safety, and now, the headlong intrepidity of Roland's attempt proved its security, for at each step, as the ivy gave way beneath his grasp or his footing, by an upward spring he reached another spot, which in its turn broke with his weight: every instant the danger increased, for the frail tendrils grew weaker as he ascended, and beneath him the jagged and drooping branches hung down in ruinous disorder. By one bold spring he reached the window-sill, and after a momentary struggle, in which his athletic frame saved him from certain death, he gained a footing upon the stone, and was able to see what was passing within the room.

At a table covered with papers and open letters Linton sat, searching with eager haste for the missing documents; open boxes and presses on every side, rifled of their contents, were seen, some of which lay in disordered masses upon the floor—some in charred heaps within the fender. As the light fell upon his features, Cashel remarked that they were lividly pale—the very lips were colourless; his hands, too, trembled violently as they moved among the papers, and his mouth continued to be moved by short convulsive twitches. To Roland these signs of suffering conveyed a perfect ecstasy of pleasure. That careworn, haggard face—that tremulous cheek and lustreless eye, were already an instalment of his vengeance.

There was one box which contained many of Cashel's early letters, when he was following the wild buccaneering life of the West; and this, secured by a lock of peculiar construction, Linton had never succeeded in opening. It stood before him, as with a last effort he tried every art upon it. The hinges alone seemed to offer a prospect of success, and he was now endeavouring to remove the fastenings of these. With more of force than skill, for defeat had rendered him impatient, Linton had already loosened the lid, when Cashel burst open the sash with one vigorous blow, and leaped into the room.

The terrible crash of the shattered window made Linton spring round; and there he stood, confronted with the other—each, motionless and silent. In Cashel's steady, manly form there was a very world of indignant contempt; and Linton met the gaze with a look of deadly hatred. All the

dissimulation by which he could cover over a treachery was at an end; his deceit was no longer of use, and he stood forth in the full courage of his scoundrelism—bold, steady, and assured.

"This admits of no excuse—no palliation," said Cashel, as he pointed to the open letters and papers which covered the floor; and although the words were uttered calmly, they were more disconcerting than if given with passionate vehemence.

"I never thought of any," replied Linton, collectedly.

"So much the better, Sir. It seems to me, frankness is the only reparation you can make for past infamy!"

"It may be the only one you will be disposed to ask for," said Linton, sneeringly.

Cashel grew fiery red. To taunt him with want of courage was something so unexpected—for which he was so totally unprepared—that he lost his self-possession, and in a passionate tone exclaimed:

"Is it *you* who dare to say this to *me?*—you, whose infamy has need but to be published abroad, to make every one who calls himself 'Gentleman' shun your very contact!"

"This punctilious reverence for honour does infinite credit to your buccaneer education," said Linton, whose eyes sparkled with malignant delight at the angry passion he had succeeded in evoking. "The friendship of escaped felons must have a wondrous influence upon refinement."

"Enough, Sir!" said Cashel. "How came you into the room, since the key of it is in my pocket?"

"Were I to inform you," said Linton, "you would acknowledge it was by a much more legitimate mode than that by which you effected your entrance."

"You shall decide which is the pleasanter, then!" cried Cashel, as he tore open the window, and advanced in a menacing manner towards the other.

"Take care, Cashel," said Linton, in a low, deliberate voice; "I am armed!"

And while he spoke, he placed one hand within the breast of his coat, and held it there. Quick as was the motion, it was not sudden enough to escape the flashing eye of Roland, who sprang upon him, and seized his wrist with a grasp that nearly jammed the bones together.

"Provoke me a little further," cried he, "and, by Heaven! I'll not give you the choice or chance of safety, but hurl you from that window as I would the meanest housebreaker."

"Let me free—let me loose, Sir," said Linton, in a low, weak voice,

which passion, not fear, had reduced to a mere whisper. "You shall have the satisfaction you aim at, when, and how, you please."

"By daylight to-morrow, at the boat-quay beside the lake."

"Agreed. There is no need of witnesses—we understand each other."

"Be it so. Be true to your word, and none shall hear from *me* the reasons of our meeting, nor what has occurred here this night."

"I care not if all the world knew it," said Linton, insolently; "I came in quest of a lost document—one, which I had my reasons to suspect had fallen into your possession."

"And of whose forgery I have the proofs," said Cashel, as opening the deed, he held it up before Linton's eyes. "Do you see that?"

"And do you know, Cashel," cried Linton, assuming a voice of slow and most deliberate utterance, "that your own title to this property is as valueless and as worthless as that document you hold there? Do you know that there is in existence a paper which, produced in an open court of justice, would reduce you to beggary, and stamp you, besides, as an impostor? It may be that you are well aware of that fact; and that the same means by which you have possessed yourself of what was mine, has delivered into your hands this valuable paper. But the subtlety is thrown away; *I* am cognisant of its existence; *I* have even shown it to another; and on *me* it depends whether you live here as a master, or walk forth in all the exposure of a cheat."

The nature of this announcement, its possible truth, added to the consummate effrontery of him who made it, contributed to render Cashel silent, for he was actually stunned by what he heard. Linton saw the effect, but mistook its import. He believed that some thought of a compromise was passing through a mind where vengeance alone predominated; and in this error he drew nearer to him, and in a voice of cool and calm persuasion added:

"That *you* could pilot the course through all these difficulties, no one knows better than yourself to be impossible. There is but one living able to do so, and *I* am that one."

Cashel started back, and Linton went on:

"There is no question of friendship between us here. It is a matter of pure interest and mutual convenience that binds us. Agree to my terms, and you are still the owner of the estate; reject them, and you are as poor as poverty and exposure can make you."

"Scoundrel!" said Cashel. It was all that he could utter: the fulness of his passion had nearly choked him, as, taking a heavy riding-glove from the table, he struck Linton with it across the face. "If there be any manhood in such a wretch, let this provoke it!"

Linton's hand grasped the weapon he carried within his coat, but with a quick, short stroke Cashel struck down his arm, and it fell powerless to his side.

"You shall pay dearly for this—dearly, by Heaven!" cried Linton, as he retired towards the door.

"Go, Sir," said Cashel, flinging it wide open, "and go quickly, or I may do that I should be sorry for."

"You have done that you will be sorry for, if it costs me my life's blood to buy it." And with these words, delivered in a voice guttural from rage, Linton disappeared, and Cashel stood alone in the centre of the room, overwhelmed by the terrible conflict of his passions.

The room littered with papers—the open boxes scattered on every side—his own hands cut and bleeding from the broken glass of the window—his dress torn from the recent exertion—were evidences of the past; and it seemed as though, without such proofs, he could not credit his memory, as to events so strange and stunning.

To restore something like order to his chamber, as a means of avoiding the rumours that would be circulated by servants; to write some letters—the last, perhaps, he should ever indite; to dress and appear among his company; to send for some one with whom he might confer as to his affairs—such were the impulses that alternately swayed him, and to which he yielded by turns; now, seating himself at his table; now, hastening hither and thither, tossing over the motley livery of distasteful pleasure, or handling, with the rapture of revenge, the weapons by which he hoped to wreak his vengeance. The only fear that dwelt upon his mind was, lest Linton should escape him—lest, by any accident, this, which now appeared the great business of his life, should go unacquitted. Sometimes he reproached himself for having postponed the hour of vengeance, not knowing what chances might intervene, what accidents interrupt the course of his sworn revenge. Fortune, wealth, station, love itself had no hold upon him; it was that mad frame of mind where one sole thought predominates, and, in its mastery, makes all else subordinate. Would Linton be true to the rendezvous?—Could such a man be a coward?—Would he compass the vengeance he had threatened by other means? were questions that constantly occurred to his mind.

If the sounds of music and the clangour of festivity did break in upon this mood from time to time, it was but to convey some indistinct and shadowy impression of the inconsistency between his sad brooding and the scene by which he was surrounded—between the terrible conflict within him, and the wild gaiety of those who wasted no thought upon him.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### MURDER OF MR. KENNYFECK—CASHEL DETAINED ON SUSPICION.

Amid their feasting and their joy
A cry of "Blood!" was heard.

It was past midnight, and the scene within the walls of Tubbermore was one of the most brilliant festivity. All that could fascinate by beauty—all that could dazzle by splendour, or amuse by fancy, or enliven by wit, were there, stimulated by that atmosphere of pleasure in which they moved. Loveliness elevated by costume—grace rendered more attractive by the licensed freedom of the hour—gaiety exalted into exuberant joyousness by the impulse of a thousand high-beating hearts—passed and repassed, and mingled together, till they formed that brilliant assemblage wherein individuality is lost, and the memory carries away nothing but dreamy images of enjoyment, visions of liquid eyes and silky tresses, of fair rounded arms and fairy feet, with stray syllables that linger on the ear and vibrate in the heart for many a long year to come.

It would have been difficult to imagine that one, even one, amid that gorgeous throng, had any other thought than pleasure, so headlong seemed the impulse of enjoyment. In vain the moralist might have searched for any trace of that care which is believed to be the unceasing burden of humanity. Even upon those who sustained no portion of the brilliancy around them, pleasure had set its seal. Lady Janet herself wondered, and admired, and stared, in an ecstasy of delight she could neither credit nor comprehend. It was true, Linton's absence—"unaccountable," as she called it—was a sad drawback upon her enjoyment. Yet her own shrewdness enabled her to penetrate many a mystery, and detect beneath the dusky folds of more than one domino those who a few moments previous had displayed themselves in all the splendour of a gorgeous costume.

In vain did Lord Charles Frobisher cover his Tartar dress with a Lay lander's cloak and hood, to follow Miss Meek unnoticed. In vain did Upton abandon his royalty as Henri IV. for a Dominican's cowl, the better to approach a certain fair nun with dark blue eyes: Lady Janet whispered, "Take care, Olivia," as she passed her. Even Mrs. Leicester White, admirably disguised as a Gipsy Fortune-teller, did not dare to speculate upon Lady Janet's "future"—possibly, out of fear of her "present." Mr.

Howle alone escaped detection, as, dressed to represent the Obelisk of the "Luqsor," he stood immovable in the middle of the room, listening to everybody, and never supposed to be anything but an inanimate ornament of the saloon.

It was only when a minuet was about to be formed, and a question arose as to whether the obelisk could not be removed, that the Egyptian monument was seen slowly sidling off amidst the company, to the great amusement of all who had not opened their confidences beneath its shadow. For an instant, the laughter that circulated in many a distant group was directed to this quarter, and bursts of merriment were excited by the absurdity of the incident. With that mysterious instinct by which moods of joy or grief are perpetuated from heart to heart, till each in a crowded assembly is moved as is his neighbour, the whole room shook with convulsive laughter. It was just then—at the very moment when boundless pleasure filled every avenue of feeling—a terrible cry, shrill and piercing, burst upon the air. All was still—still as a lone church at midnight. Each gazed upon the other, as if silently asking, had he heard the sound? Again it came, louder and nearer; and then a long, loud, swelling chant rang out, wild and frantic as it rose, till it died away in a cadence of the very saddest and dreariest meaning.

"What is it?—What can it be?" were uttered by many in broken voices; while others, too much terrified to speak, sank half fainting upon their seats, their colourless cheeks and livid lips in terrible contrast to their gay attire.

"There!—listen to it again!—Good Heaven! what can it be?"

"It's a death 'keen!'" said a country gentleman, a magistrate named Goring; "something must have happened among the people!"

And now, none knew from what quarter arising, or by whom spoken, but the dreadful word "MURDER" was heard through the room. Many issued forth to ask for tidings; some, stayed to assure and rally the drooping courage of others; some, again, divested of the "motley," moved hurriedly about, seeking for this one or that. All was terror, confusion, and dismay.

"Oh, here is Mr. Linton!" cried several, as, with his domino on his arm, pale, and like one terror-struck, he entered the room. "What is it, Mr Linton? Do you know what has happened?"

"Get Mrs. Kennyfeck and the girls away," whispered he to a friend, hurriedly; "tell them something—anything—but take them from this."

"What!" exclaimed Meek, to whom Linton had whispered something, but in a voice too low to be clearly audible.

"Kennyfeck is murdered!" said Linton, louder.

As if the terrible tidings had floated on the air, in an instant it was on every tongue, and vibrating in every ear; and then, in heartrending screams of passionate grief, the cry of the widow and her children burst forth, cry following cry in wild succession. Seized with an hysteric paroxysm, Mrs. Kennyfeck was carried to her room; while of her daughters, the elder sat mute, speechless, and, to all seeming, insensible; the younger, struggling in convulsive passion to go to her father.

What a scene was that! How dreadful to mark the symbols of levity—the decorations by which Pleasure would mock the stern realities of Life—surrounded as they now were by suffering and sorrow! to see the groups as they stood; some ministering to one who had fainted, others conversing in low and eager whispers. The joyous smiles, the bright glances, were gone, as though they had been by masks assumed at will; tears furrowed their channels through the deep rouge, and convulsive sobs broke from beneath corsets where joy alone had vibrated before. While in the ball-room the scene was one of terror and dismay, a few had withdrawn into a small apartment adjoining the garden, to consult upon what the emergency might require. These were drawn together by Linton, and included Sir Andrew MacFarline, the Chief Justice, Meek, and a few others of lesser note. In a few words Linton informed them that he heard the tidings as he passed through the hall; that a peasant, taking the mountain path to Scariff, had come upon the spot where the murder was committed, and found the body still warm, but lifeless—"he also found this weapon, the bore of which was dirty from a recent discharge as he took it up."

"Why, this pistol is Mr. Cashel's!" exclaimed Sir Andrew, examining the stock closely; "I know it perfectly—I have fired with it myself a hundred times."

"Impossible, my dear Sir Andrew!" cried Linton, eagerly. "You must be mistaken."

"Where is Mr. Cashel?" asked the Chief Justice.

"No one seems to know," replied Linton. "At a very early hour this morning he left this in company with poor Kennyfeck. It would appear that they were not on the best of terms together; at least, some of the servants overheard angry words pass between them as they drove away."

"Let us call these people before us," said Sir Andrew.

"Not at present, Sir. It would be premature and indiscreet," interposed the Judge. Then, turning to Linton, he added, "Well, Sir, and after that?"

"After that we have no tidings of either of them."

"I'll swear to the pistol, anyhow," said Sir Andrew, who sat staring at the weapon, and turning it about in every direction.

"Of what nature were the differences between Cashel and Kennyfeck supposed to be?" asked Meek of Linton.

"It is impossible to collect, from the few and broken sentences which have been reported; possibly, dissatisfaction on Cashel's part at the difficulty of obtaining money; possibly, some misunderstanding about his intentions regarding one of the girls, whom the Kennyfecks were silly enough to suppose he was going to marry."

A slight tap at the door here arrested their attention. It was Mr. Phillis, who came to say that footsteps had been heard in Mr. Cashel's dressing-room, although it was well known he himself had not returned.

"Might he not have returned and entered the room unseen, Sir?" said the Chief Justice, who cast a shrewd and piercing look upon the valet.

"Scarcely, my Lord, since he is known to every servant in the house, and people are passing and repassing in every direction."

"But there is every reason to believe that he has not returned at all," interposed Linton. "It is some one else has been heard in his dressing-room."

"Would it not be as well to despatch messengers to Drumcoologan," said Meek, "and assure ourselves of Cashel's safety? Up to this we are ignorant if he have not shared the fate of poor Kennyfeck."

"The very suggestion I was about to make. I'll take Phillis along with me, and set out this instant," cried Linton.

"We shall miss your assistance greatly here, Sir," said the Chief Justice.

"Your Lordship overvalues my poor ability; but I will hasten to the utmost, and be soon back again." And thus saying, he left the room, followed by Phillis.

"There must be an inquest at once," said the Chief Justice. "The Coroner has power to examine witnesses on oath; and it seems to me that some clue to the affair will present itself."

"As to this room, don't you think it were proper to inquire if any one be really within it?" asked Meek.

"Yes; we will proceed thither together," replied the Judge.

"I canna be mistaken in the pistol; I'll swear to that," chimed in Sir Andrew, whose whole thoughts were centred on that object.

"Well, Mr. Goring," said Meek, as that gentleman advanced to meet them in the corridor, "have you obtained any clue to this sad affair?"

The magistrate drew near, and whispered a few words in the other's ear. Meek started, and grasped the speaker's arm convulsively; then, after a pause, said, "Tell the Chief Justice." Mr. Goring approached, and said something in a low voice to the Judge.

"Be cautious, Sir; take care to whom you mention these circumstances, lest they be bruited about before we can examine into them," said the Chief Justice; then retiring into a window with Sir Andrew and Meek, he continued: "This gentleman has just informed me that the impress of a boot with a high heel has been discovered near the spot where the murder was committed; which boot exactly tallies with that worn by Mr. Cashel."

"The pistol is his; I'll tak' my oath on that," muttered Sir Andrew.

"Here's Phillis coming back," said Meek. "What's the matter, Phillis?"

"Mr. Linton sent me back, Sir, to say that the ivy which covered the wall on the east end of the house has been torn down, and seems to infer that some one must have climbed up it, to reach my master's dressing-room."

"This is a very important circumstance," said the Chief Justice. "Let us examine the room at once." And so saying, he led the way towards it.

Not a word was spoken as the party passed along the corridor and ascended the stairs; each feared, even by a syllable, to betray the terrible suspicions that were haunting his mind. It was a solemn moment; and so their looks and gestures bespoke it. The house itself had suddenly become silent; scarce a sound was heard within that vast building, which so late had rung with revelry and joy. A distant door would clap, or a faintly-heard shriek from some one still suffering from the recent shock; but all else was hushed and still.

"That is the room," said Meek, pointing to a door, beneath which, although it was now daybreak, a stream of light issued; and, slight as the circumstance was, the looks exchanged among the party seemed to give it a significance.

The Chief Justice advanced and tapped at the door. Immediately a voice was heard from within that all recognised as Cashel's, asking,

"Who's there?"

"We want you, Mr. Cashel," said the Judge, in an accent which all the instincts of his habit had not rendered free from a slight tremor.

The door was immediately thrown wide, and Roland stood before them. He had not changed his dress since his arrival, and his torn sleeve and blood-stained trousers at once caught every eye that was fixed upon him. The disorder, too, was not confined to his own haggard look; the room itself was littered with papers and letters, with clothes strewn carelessly in every direction; and, conspicuously amid all, an open pistol-case was seen, from which one of the weapons was missing. A mass of charred paper lay within the fender, and a great heap of paper lay, as it were ready for

burning, beside the hearth. There was full time for those who stood there to notice all these particulars, since neither spoke, but each gazed on the other in terrible uncertainty. Cashel was the first to break the silence.

"Well, Sirs, said he, in a voice that only an effort made calm, "are my friends so very impatient at my absence that they come to seek me in my dressing-room?"

"The dreadful event that has just occurred, Sir," said the Judge, "makes apology for our intrusion unnecessary. We are here from duty, Mr. Cashel, not inclination, still less caprice."

The solemnity of manner in which he spoke, and the grave faces around him on every side, seemed to apprise Roland that bad tidings awaited him, and he looked eagerly to each for an explanation. At length, as none spoke, he said:

"Will no one vouchsafe to put an end to this mystification? What, I pray, is this event that has happened?"

"Mr. Kennyfeck has been murdered," said the Judge.

Roland staggered backwards, and grasped a chair for support. "When?—How?—Where?" said he, in a low voice, every accent of which trembled.

"All as yet is hidden in mystery, Sir. We know nothing beyond the fact that his dead body was discovered in the Gap of Ennismore, and that a pistol-shot had penetrated his brain." Sir Andrew grasped the weapon more tightly as these words were uttered.

"You left this in his company, Mr. Cashel?" asked Goring.

"Yes; we set out at daybreak for Drumcoologan, where an affair of business required our presence. We spent the whole of the day together, and as evening drew nigh, and our business had not been completed, I resolved to hasten back here, leaving him to follow whenever he could."

"You have been on the best terms together, I believe?" said Goring.

"Stay—I cannot permit this," interposed the Chief Justice, authoritatively. "There must be nothing done here which is not strictly honourable as well as legal. It is right that Mr. Cashel should understand that when an event of this nature has occurred, no one, however high his station, or unblemished his fame, can claim exemption from that scrutiny which the course of justice demands; and the persons latest in the company of the deceased are more peculiarly those exposed to such inquiry. I would, therefore, caution him against answering any questions here, which may be prejudicial hereafter."

"Do I understand you aright, my Lord?" said Cashel, whose whole frame trembled with agitation as he spoke. "Do your words imply that I stand here in the light of a suspected party?"

"I mean to say, Sir," replied the Judge, "that so long as doubt and obscurity veil the history of a crime, the accusation hangs over the community at large among whom it was enacted, and that those who were last seen in the presence of the victim have the greatest obligation to disconnect themselves with the sad event."

"But you stopped me while about to do so," cried Roland, angrily.

"I cautioned you, rather, against any disclosures which, whatever your innocence, might augment suspicion against you," said the Judge, mildly.

"These distinctions are too subtle for me, my Lord. The insult of such an accusation ought to be enough, without the aggravation of chicanery." Then, turning to Meek, Roland went on—"You, at least, are above this meanness, and will listen to me patiently. Look here." He took a sheet of paper as he spoke, and proceeded with a pen to mark out the direction of the two roads from Drumcoologan to Tubbermore. "Here stands the village; the road by which we travelled in the morning takes this line, skirting the base of the mountain towards the north: the path by which I returned follows a shorter course, and after crossing a little rivulet here, comes out at Ennismore, somewhere about this point."

Just as Roland's description reached thus far, a large drop of blood oozed from his wounded hand, and fell heavily upon the paper. There seemed something so terribly significant in its falling exactly on the very spot where the murdered body was found, that each looked at the other in anxious dread; and then, as if with a common impulse, every eye was bent on Cashel, who, heart-sick with indignant anger, stood unable to utter a word.

"I pray you, Sir, do not misconstrue my advice," said the Judge, mildly, "nor resent a counsel intended for your good. Every explanation you may offer, hereafter, will be serviceable to your case; every detail you enter into, now, necessarily vague, and unsupported as it must be by other testimony, will only be injurious to you."

Cashel seated himself in a chair, and crossing his arms, seemed to be lost in thought; then, suddenly starting to his feet, he cried,

"Is all this a deep-laid scheme against my honour and my life, or do you, indeed, desire to trace this crime to its author? If so, let us mount our horses and scour the country; let us search every cabin; let us try if some discovery of a weapon——"

"Ech, Sirs, we hae the weapon!" said Sir Andrew, with a sardonic grin; "an' it's muckle like to its brither yonder," pointing to the open pistol-case.

Roland turned suddenly, and now for the first time perceived that one of his pistols was missing from the case. Up to this moment his anger at

the suspicions directed towards him were mingled with a degree of contemptuous disregard of them; but now, suddenly, a terrible fear shot through his heart that he was in the meshes of some deep-laid scheme for his ruin; and his mind ran over in eager haste every circumstance that seemed to point towards guilt. His presence with Kennyfeck on the mountain—his departure from Drumcoologan alone—his unexplained reappearance in his own chamber, disordered and littered as it stood—his torn dress—his bleeding fingers—and lastly, the missing pistol—arose in terrible array before him; and, with a heart-sick sigh, he laid his forehead on the table, and never uttered a word.

It was at this juncture that a groom, splashed and heated from a hard ride, placed a small bit of twisted paper in Mr. Goring's hand. It was written with pencil, and ran thus:

"Gap of Ennismore.

"DEAR G.,

"It looks badly; but I fear you have no other course than to arrest him. In fact, it is too late for anything else. Consult Malone and Meek.

"Yours, in great haste,

"T. LINTON."

Goring handed the note to the Chief Justice, who, having read it, passed it on to Meek. A nod from the latter, as he refolded the paper, seemed to accord concurrence with the counsel.

"Would it not be better to defer this till after the inquest?" he whispered.

"Are ye certain o' findin' him when ye want him?" dryly remarked Sir Andrew.

The Chief Justice conferred for a few seconds with Meek apart, and then approaching Cashel, addressed him in a tone inaudible to all but himself:

"It would be excessively painful to us, Mr. Roland Cashel, to do anything which should subject you to vulgar remark or impertinent commentary; and as, until some further light be thrown upon this sad catastrophe, your detention is absolutely necessary, may I ask that you will submit to this rigour, without compelling us to any measures to enforce it."

"Am I a prisoner, my Lord?" asked Roland, growing lividly pale as he spoke.

"Not precisely, Sir. No warrant has been issued against you; but as it is manifestly for your advantage to disprove any suspicions that may attach to you in this unhappy affair, I hope you will see the propriety of remaining where you are until they be entirely removed."

Roland bowed coldly, and said,

"May I ask to be left alone?"

"Of course, Sir; we have neither the right nor the inclination to obtrude ourselves upon you. I ought to mention, perhaps, that if you desire to confer with any friend——"

"Friend!" echoed Cashel, in bitter derision; "such friends as I have seen around my table make the selection difficult."

"I used the phrase somewhat technically, Sir, as referring to a legal adviser," said the Judge, hastily.

"I thank you, *my* Lord," replied Roland, haughtily. "I am a plain man, and am well aware that in *your* trade truth is no match for falsehood." He walked to the window as he spoke, and by his gesture seemed to decline further colloquy.

The Chief Justice moved slowly away, followed by the others; Meek withdrawing last of all, and seeming to hesitate whether he should not say something as he went. At last he turned and said:

"I sincerely trust, Mr. Cashel, that you will not connect me with this most painful suspicion; your own good sense will show you how common minds may be affected by a number of concurring circumstances; and how, in fact, truth may require the aid of ingenuity to reconcile and explain them."

"I am not certain that I understand your meaning, Sir," said Cashel, sternly; "but when a number of 'concurring circumstances' seemed to point out those with whom I associated as blacklegs, parasites, and calumniators, I gave them the benefit of a doubt, and believed them to be gentlemen; I almost expected they might return the favour when occasion offered."

For a second or two Meek seemed as if about to reply; but he moved noiselessly away at last and closed the door, leaving Roland alone with his own distracted thoughts.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

SCENE OF THE MURDER—THE CORONER'S VERDICT.

> Are there not proofs enough?
> Or can the stubborn mind reject all truth
> And cling to fallacy?
>
> THE WILL.

WHAT a change did Tubbermore present to its aspect of the day before! All the emblems of joy and festivity, all the motley of pleasure, all the gay troops of guests hastening onward in glowing eagerness and anticipation, were gone; and in their stead a dreary and mysterious silence brooded over the place, interrupted at intervals by the bustle of some departure. For thus, without one word of sympathy, without even a passing good-by, Roland's "friends" hurried away, as if flying from the very memories of the spot.

It was a dreary winter's day; the dark leaden clouds that flitted past, and the long sighing wind, seemed to add their sad influence to the melancholy. The house itself already appeared to feel its altered fortunes. Most of the windows were closed and shuttered; the decorations of rare plants and shrubs and lamps were removed; instead of the movement of liveried servants to and fro, ill-favoured and coarse-clad men, the underlings of the law, crept stealthily about, noticing each circumstance of the locality, and conferring together in mysterious whispers. Mounted messengers, too, came and went with a haste that boded urgency; and post-horses were each moment arriving to carry away those whose impatience to leave was manifested in a hundred ways. Had the air of the place been infected with some pestilential malady, their eagerness could scarce have been greater. All the fretful irritability of selfishness, all the peevish discontent of petty natures, exhibited themselves without shame; and envious expressions towards those fortunate enough to "get away first," and petulant complaints over their own delay, were bandied on every side.

A great table was laid for breakfast in the dining-room, as usual. All the luxuries and elegances that graced the board on former occasions were there, but a few only took their places. Of these, Frobisher and some military men were the chief. They, indeed, showed comparatively little of that anxiety to be gone so marked in the others. The monotony of the

barrack and the parade was not attractive, and they lingered like men who, however little they had of pleasure here, had even less of inducement to betake them elsewhere.

Meek had been the first to make his escape, by taking the post-horses intended for another, and already was many miles on his way towards Dublin. The Chief Justice and his family were the next. From the hour of the fatal event, Mrs. Malone had assumed a judicial solemnity of demeanour that produced a great impression upon the beholders, and seemed to convey, by a kind of reflected light, the old Judge's gloomiest forebodings of the result.

Mrs. Leicester White deferred her departure to oblige Mr. Howle, who was making a series of sketches for the *Pictorial Paul Pry*, showing not only the various façades of Tubbermore House, but several interesting "interiors:" such as the "Ball-room when the fatal tidings arrived;" "Dressing-room of Roland Cashel, Esq., when entered by the Chief Justice and his party;" the most effective of all being a very shadowy picture of the "Gap of Ennismore—the scene of the murder;" the whole connected by a little narrative so ingeniously drawn up as to give public opinion a very powerful bias against Cashel, whose features, in the woodcut, would in themselves have made a formidable indictment.

Of the Kennyfecks, few troubled themselves with even a casual inquiry: except the fact that a fashionable physician had been sent for to Dublin, little was known about them. But where was Linton all this while? Some averred that he had set out for the capital, to obtain the highest legal assistance for his friend; others, that he was so overwhelmed by the terrible calamity as to have fallen into a state of fatuous insensibility. None, however, could really give any correct account of him. He had left Tubbermore, but in what direction none could tell.

As the day wore on, a heavy rain began to fall; and of those who still remained in the house, little knots of two and three assembled at the windows, to watch for the arrival of their wished-for "posters," or to speculate upon the weather. Another source of speculation there was besides. Some hours before, a magistrate, accompanied by a group of ill-dressed and vulgar-looking men, had been seen to pass the house, and take the path which led to the Gap of Ennismore. These formed the Inquest, who were to inquire into the circumstances of the crime, and whose verdict, however unimportant in a strictly legal sense, was looked for with considerable impatience by some of the company. To judge from the anxious looks that were directed towards the mountain-road, or the piercing glances which at times were given through telescopes in that direction, one would have augured that some, at least, of those there, were not destitute of sympathy for him

whose guests they had been, and beneath whose roof they still lingered. A very few words of those that passed between them will best answer how this impression is well founded.

"Have you sent your groom off, Upton?" asked Frobisher, as he stood with a coffee-cup in his hand at the window.

"Yes, he passed the window full half an hour ago."

"They are confoundedly tedious," said Jennings, half suppressing a yawn. "I thought those kind of fellows just gave a look at the body, and pronounced their verdict at once."

"So they do when it's one of their own class; but in the case of a gentleman they take a prodigious interest in examining his watch, and his purse, and his pocket-book; and, in fact, it is a grand occasion for prying as far as possible into his private concerns."

"I'll double our bet, Upton, if you like," said Frobisher, languidly.

The other shook his head negatively.

"Why, the delay is clearly in your favour, man. If they were strong in their convictions, they'd have brought him in guilty an hour ago."

"That is my opinion too," said Jennings.

"Well, here goes. Two fifties be it," cried Upton.

Frobisher took out his memorandum-book and wrote something with a pencil.

"Isn't that it?" said he, showing the lines to Upton.

"Just so. 'Wilful murder,'" muttered the other, reading.

"You have a great 'pull' upon me, Upton," said Frobisher; "by Jove! if you were generous, you'd give me odds."

"How so?"

"Why, you saw his face since the affair, and I didn't."

"It would need a better physiognomist than I am to read it. He looked exactly as he always does; a thought paler, perhaps, but no other change."

"Here comes a fellow with news," said Jennings, throwing open the window. "I say, my man, is it over?"

"No, Sir; the Jury want to see one of Mr. Cashel's boots."

Jennings closed the sash, and lighting a cigar, sat down in any easy-chair. A desultory conversation here arose among some of the younger military men whether a coroner's verdict were final, and whether a "fellow could be hanged" when it pronounced him guilty; the astute portion of the debaters inclining to the opinion that although this was not the case in England, such would be "law" in Ireland. Then the subject of confiscation was entertained, and various doubts and surmises arose as to what would become of Tubbermore when its proprietor had been executed; with sly jests about the reversionary rights of the Crown, and the magnanimity of extending

mercy at the price of a great landed estate. These filled up the time for an hour or so more, interspersed with conjectures as to Cashel's present frame of mind, and considerable wonderment why he hadn't "bolted" at once.

At last Upton's groom was seen approaching at a tremendous pace; and in a few minutes after he had pulled up at the door, and dismounting with a spring, hastened into the house.

"Well, Robert, how did it go?" cried Upton, as, followed by the rest, he met him in the hall.

"You've lost, Sir," said the man, wiping his forehead.

"Confound the rascals! But what are the words of the verdict?"

"'Wilful murder,' Sir."

"Of course," said Frobisher, coolly; "they could give no other."

"It's no use betting against you," cried Upton, pettishly. "You are the luckiest dog in Europe."

"Come, I'll give you a chance," said Frobisher; "double or quit that they hang him."

"No, no; I've lost enough on him. I'll not have it."

"Well, I suppose we've nothing to wait for now," yawned Jennings. "Shall we start?"

"Not till we have luncheon, I vote," cried an Infantry Sub; and his suggestion met general approval. And while they are seated at a table where exquisite meats and rarest wines stimulated appetite and provoked excess, let us turn for a few brief moments to him who, still their entertainer, sat in his lone chamber, friendless and deserted.

So rapid had been the succession of events which occupied one single night, that Roland could not believe it possible months had not passed over Even then, he found it difficult to disentangle the real circumstances from those fancied results his imagination had already depicted; many of the true incidents appearing far more like fiction than the dreamy fancies his mind invented. His meeting with Enrique, for instance, was infinitely less probable than that he should have fought a duel with Linton; and so, in many other cases, his faculties wavered between belief and doubt, till his very senses reeled with the confusion. Kennyfeck's death alone stood out from this chaotic mass, clear, distinct, and palpable, and, as he sat brooding over this terrible fact, he was totally unconscious of its bearing upon his own fortunes. Selfishness formed no part of his nature; his fault lay in the very absence of self-esteem, and the total deficiency of that individuality which prompts men to act up to a self-created standard. He could sorrow for him who was no more, and from whom he had received stronger proofs of devotion than from all his so-called friends; he could grieve over the widowed mother and the fatherless girls, for whose destitution he felt, he

knew not how or wherefore, a certain culpability; but of himself and his own critical position, not a thought arose. The impressions that no effort of his own could convey, fell with a terrific shock upon him when suggested by another.

He was seated at his table, trying, for the twentieth time, to collect his wandering thoughts, and determine what course to follow, when a tap was heard at his door, and it opened at the same instant.

"I am come, Sir," said Mr. Goring, with a voice full of feeling, "to bring you sad tidings; but for which events may have, in a measure, prepared you." He paused; perhaps hoping that Cashel would spare him the pain of continuing; but Roland never spoke.

"The inquest has completed its labours," said Goring, with increasing agitation; "and the verdict is one of 'wilful murder.'"

"It was a foul and terrible crime," said Cashel, shuddering; "the poor fellow was animated with kind intentions and benevolent views towards the people. In all our intercourse, he displayed but one spirit——"

"Have a care, Sir," said Goring, mildly. "It is just possible that, in the frankness of the moment, something may escape you which hereafter you might wish unsaid; and standing in the position you now do——"

"How so? What position, Sir, do I occupy, that should preclude me from the open expression of my sentiments?"

"I have already told you, Sir, that the verdict of the jury was wilful murder, and I hold here in my hand the warrant for your arrest."

"As the criminal? as the murderer?" cried Cashel, with a voice almost like a shriek of agony. Goring bowed his head, and Roland fell powerless on the floor.

Summoning others to his aid, Goring succeeded in lifting him up and placing him on a bed. A few drops of blood that issued from his mouth, and his heavy snoring respiration, indicated an apoplectic seizure. Messengers were sent in various directions to fetch a doctor. Tiernay was absent, and it was some hours ere one could be found. Large bleeding and quiet produced the usual effects, and towards evening Cashel's consciousness had returned; but memory was still clouded and incoherent, and he lay without speaking, and almost without thought.

After the lapse of about a week he was able to leave his bed and creep about his chamber, whose altered look contributed to recal his mind to the past. All his papers and letters had been removed; the window was secured with iron stanchions; and policemen stood sentry at the door. He remembered everything that had occurred, and sat down in patient thought to consider what he should do.

He learned without surprise, but not without a pang, that of all his friends

not one had remained—not one had offered a word of counsel in his affliction, or of comfort in his distress. He asked after Mr. Corrigan, and heard that he had quitted the country, with his granddaughter, on the day before the terrible event. Tiernay, it was said, had accompanied them to Dublin, and not since returned. Roland was, then, utterly friendless! What wonder if he became as utterly reckless, as indifferent to life, as life seemed valueless? And so was it: he heard with indifference the order for his removal to Limerick, although that implied a gaol! He listened to the vulgar, but kindly-meant counsels of his keepers, who advised him to seek legal assistance, with a smile of half-contempt. The obdurate energy of a martyrdom seemed to take possession of him; and, so far from applying his mind to disentangle the web of suspicion around him, he watched, with a strange interest, the convergence of every minute circumstance towards the proof of his guilt; a secret vindictiveness whispering to his heart that the day would come when his innocence should be proclaimed; and then, what tortures of remorse would be theirs who had brought him to a felon's death!

Each day added to the number of these seeming proofs, and the newspapers, in paragraphs of gossiping, abounded with circumstances that had already convinced the public of Cashel's guilt: and how often do such shadowy convictions throw their gloom over the prisoner's dock! One day, the fact of the boot-track tallying precisely with Roland's, filled the town; another, it was the pistol-wadding—part of a letter addressed to Cashel—had been discovered. Then, there were vague rumours afloat that the causes of Cashel's animosity to Kennyfeck were not so secret as the world fancied; that there were persons of credit to substantiate and explain them; and, lastly, it was made known, that among the papers seized on Cashel's table was a letter, just begun by himself, but to whom addressed uncertain, which ran thus:

"As these in all likelihood may be the last lines I shall ever write——"

Never, in all the gaudy glare of his prosperity, had he occupied more of public attention. The metaphysical penny-a-liners speculated upon the influence his old buccaneer habits might have exercised upon a mind so imperfectly trained to civilisation; and amused themselves with guesses as to how far some Indian "cross" in blood might not have contributed to his tragic vengeance. Less scrupulous scribes invented deeds of violence: in a word, there seemed a kind of impulse abroad to prove him guilty; and it would have been taken as a piece of casuistry, or a mawkish sympathy with crime, to assume the opposite. Not, indeed, that any undertook so ungracious a task; the tide of accusation ran uninterrupted and unbroken. The very friendless desolation in which he stood was quoted and com-

mented on to this end. One alone of all his former friends made an effort in his favour, and ventured to insinuate that his guilt was far from certain. This was Lord Charles Frobisher, who, seeing in the one-sidedness of public opinion the impossibility of obtaining a bet, tried thus to "get up" an "innocent party," in the hope of a profitable wager.

But what became of Linton all this time? His game was a difficult one; and to enable him to play it successfully he needed reflection. To this end he affected to be so shocked by the terrible event as to be incapable of mixing in society. He retired, therefore, to his cottage near Dublin, and for some weeks lived a life of perfect seclusion. Mr. Phillis accompanied him; for Linton would not trust him out of his sight till—as he muttered in his own phrase—"all was over."

This was, indeed, the most eventful period of Linton's life; and with consummate skill he saw that any move on his part would be an error. It is true that, through channels with whose workings he was long conversant, he contributed the various paragraphs to the papers by which Cashel's guilt was foreshadowed; his knowledge of Roland suggesting many a circumstance well calculated to substantiate the charge of crime. If he never ventured abroad into the world, he made himself master of all his secret whisperings; and heard how he was himself commended for delicacy and good feeling, with the satisfaction of a man who glories in a cheat. And how many are there who play false in life, less from the gain than the gratification of vanity!—a kind of diabolical pride in outwitting and overreaching those whose good faith has made them weak! The polite world does not take the same interest in deeds of terror as do their more humble brethren; they take their "horrors" as they do their one glass of Tokay at dessert—a something, of which a little more would be nauseating. The less polished classes were, therefore, those who took the greatest pleasure in following up every clue and tracing each circumstance that pointed to Roland's guilt; and so, at last, his name was rarely mentioned among those with whom so lately he had lived in daily, almost hourly, companionship.

When Linton, then, deemed the time expired, which his feelings of grief and shame had demanded for retirement, he reappeared in the world pretty much as men had always seen him. A very close observer, if he would have suffered any one to be such, might have perhaps detected the expression of care in certain wrinkles round his mouth, and in the extra blackness of his whiskers, where grey hairs had dared to show themselves; but to the world at large these signs were inappreciable. To them he was the same even-tempered, easy-mannered man they ever saw him. Nor was this accomplished without an effort; for, however Linton saw the hour of his

vengeance draw nigh, he also perceived that all his personal plans of fortune and aggrandisement had utterly failed. The hopes he had so often cherished were all fled. His title to the cottage, his prospect of a seat in Parliament, the very sums he had won at play, and which to a large amount remained in Cashel's hands, he now perceived were all forfeited to revenge. The price was, indeed, a heavy one! and already he began to feel it so. Many of his creditors had abstained from pressing him so long as his intimacy with Cashel gave promise of future solvency. That illusion was now dispelled, and each post brought him dunning epistles, and threatening notices of various kinds. Exposures menaced him from men whose vindictiveness he was well aware of; but far more perilous than all these were his relations with Tom Keane, who continued to address letter after letter to him, craving advice and pecuniary assistance, in a tone where menace was even more palpable than entreaty. To leave these unreplied to, might have been dangerous in the extreme; to answer them, even more perilous. No other course was, then, open than to return to Tubbermore, and endeavour, in secret, to confer with this man face to face. There was not any time to lose. Cashel's trial was to take place at the ensuing assizes, which now were close at hand. Keane was to figure there as an important witness. It was absolutely necessary to see him, and caution him as to the nature of the evidence he should give, nor suffer him in the exuberance of his zeal to prove "too much."

Under pretence, therefore, of a hurried trip to London, he left his house one evening, and went on board the packet at Kingstown, dismissing his carriage as if about to depart; then, suddenly affecting to discover that his luggage had been carried away by mistake, he landed, and set out with post-horses across country towards the western road. Before midnight he was safe in the mail, on his way to Limerick; and by daybreak on the following morning he was standing in the wood of Tubbermore, and gazing with a thoughtful head upon the house, whose shuttered windows and barred doors told of its altered destiny.

From thence he wandered onward towards the cottage—some strange, inexplicable interest over him—to see once more the spot he had so often fancied to be his own, and where, with a fervour not altogether unreal, he had sworn to pass his days in tranquil solitude. Brief as had been the interval since last he stood there, the changes were considerable. The flower-plots were trampled and trodden down, the palings smashed, the ornamental trees and shrubs were injured and broken by the cattle; traces of reckless waste and carelessness were seen in the broken gates and torn gate-posts; while fragments of packing-cases, straw, and paper littered the walks and the turf around.

Looking through the windows, broken in many places, he could see the cottage was perfectly dismantled. Everything was gone: not a trace remained of those who for so many years had called it home! The desolation was complete; nor was it without its depressing influence upon him who stood there to mark it; for, strange enough, there are little spots in the minds of those, where evil actions are oftenest cradled, that form the refuge of many a tender thought! Linton remembered the cottage as he saw it bright in the morning sun; or, more cheerful still, as the closed curtains and the blazing fire gave a look of homelike comfort to which the veriest wanderer is not insensible; and now it was cold and dark. He had no self-accusings as to the cause. It was, to him, one of those sad mutations which the course of fortune is ever effecting. He even went further, and fancied how different had been their fate if they had not rejected his own alliance.

"In this world of ours," muttered he, "the cards we are dealt by Fortune would nearly always suffice to win, had we but skill. These people had a noble game before them, but, forsooth, they did not fancy their partner! And see what is come of it—ruin on every side!"

Gloomy thoughts over his own opportunities neglected—over eventful moments left to slip by unprofitably—stole over him. Many of his late speculations had been unsuccessful; he had had heavy losses on the "turf" and the "'Change." He had failed in promises by which menacing dangers had been long averted. His enemies would soon be upon him, and he was ill provided for the encounter. Vengeance alone, of all his aspirations, seemed to prosper; and he tried to revel in that thought as a compensation for every failure.

Nor was this unmixed with fear. What if Cashel should enter upon a defence by exposing the events of that last night at Tubbermore? What if he should produce the forged deed in open court? Who was to say that Enrique himself might not be forthcoming to prove his falsehood? Again: how far could he trust Tom Keane? might not the fellow's avarice suggest a tyranny impossible to endure? Weighty considerations were these, and full of their own peril. Linton paused beside the lake to ruminate, and for some time was deep buried in thought. A light rustling sound at last aroused him; he looked up, and perceived, directly in front of him, the very man of whom he was thinking—Tom Keane himself.

Both stood still, each fixedly regarding the other without speaking. It seemed a game in which he who made the first move should lose. So, certainly, did Linton feel; but not so Tom Keane, who, with an easy composure that all the other's "breeding" could not compass, said:

"Well, Sir, I hope you like your work?"

"*My* work! *my* work! How can you call it *mine*, my good friend?" replied Linton, with a great effort to appear as much at ease as the other.

"Just as ould Con Corrigan built the little pier we're standin' on this minit, though his own hands didn't lay a stone of it."

"There's no similarity between the cases whatever," said Linton, with a well-feigned laugh. "Here there was a plan—an employer—hired labourers engaged to perform a certain task."

"Well, well," broke in Keane, impatiently; "sure we're not in 'Coort,' that you need make a speech. 'Twas your own doing: deny it if you like, but don't drive me to prove it."

The tone of menace in which these words were uttered was increased by the fact, now for the first time apparent to Linton, that Tom Keane had been drinking freely that morning, and was still under the strong excitement of liquor.

Linton passed his arm familiarly within the other's, and in a voice of deep meaning, said, "Were you only as cautious as you are courageous, Tom, there's not a man in Europe I'd rather take as my partner in a dangerous enterprise. You are a glorious fellow in the hour of peril, but you are a child, a mere child, when it's over."

Keane did not speak, but a leer of inveterate cunning seemed to answer this speech.

"I say this, Tom," said Linton, coaxingly, "because I see the risk to which your natural frankness will expose you. There are fellows prowling about on every side to scrape up information about this affair; and as, in some unguarded moment, when a glass too much has made the tongue run freely, any man may say things, to explain which away afterwards he is often led to go too far——You understand me, Tom?"

"I do, Sir," said the other, nodding shortly.

"It was on that account I came down here to-day, Tom. The trial is fixed for the 15th: now, the time is so short between this and that, you can surely keep a strict watch over yourself till 'all is over?'"

"And what then, Sir?" asked Tom, with a cunning glance beneath his brows.

"After that," rejoined Linton, affecting to mistake the meaning of the question—"after that, the law takes its course, and you trouble yourself no more on the matter."

"And is that all, Mr. Linton?—is that all?" asked the man, as, freeing himself from the other's arm, he drew himself up to his full height, and stood directly in front of him.

"I must own, Tom, that I don't understand your question."

"I'll make it plain and azy for you, then," said Keane, with a hardened

determination in his manner. "'Twas you yourself put me up to this business. 'Twas you that left the pistol in my possession. 'Twas you that towld me how it was to be done, and where to do it; and"—here his voice became deep, thick, and guttural with passion—"and, by the 'mortal God! if I'm to hang for it, so will you too."

"Hang!" exclaimed Linton. "Who talks of hanging? or what possible danger do you run—except, indeed, what your own indiscreet tongue may bring upon you?"

"Isn't it as good to die on the gallows as on the road-side?" asked the other, fiercely. "What betther am I for what I done, tell me that?"

"I have told you before, and I tell you again, that when 'all is over' you shall be amply provided for."

"And why not before?" said he, almost insolently.

"If you must know the reason," said Linton, affecting a smile, "you shall hear it. Your incaution would make you at once the object of suspicion, were you to be seen with money at command as freely as you will have it hereafter."

"Will you give me that in writin'?—will you give it to me undher your hand?" asked Keane, boldly.

"Of course I will," said Linton, who was too subtle a tactician to hesitate about a pledge which could not be exacted on the instant.

"That's what I call talkin' fair," said Keane; "an', by my sowl, it's the best of your play to trate me well."

"There is only one thing in the world could induce me to do otherwise."

"An' what's that, Sir?"

"Your daring to use a threat to me!" said Linton, sternly. "There never was the man that tried that game—and there have been some just as clever fellows as Tom Keane who did try it—who didn't find that they met their match."

"I only ax what's right and fair," said the other, abashed by the daring effrontery of Linton's air.

"And you shall have it, and more. You shall either have enough to settle in America, or, if you prefer it, to live abroad."

"And why not stay at home here?" said Tom, doggedly.

"To blurt out your secret in some drunken moment, and be hanged at last!" said Linton, with a cutting irony.

"An', may be, tell how one Misther Linton put the wickedness first in my head," added Tom, as if finishing the sentence.

Linton bit his lip, and turned angrily away to conceal the mortification the speech had caused him. "My good friend," said he, in a deliberate

voice, "you think that whenever you upset the boat you will drown *me;* and I have half a mind to dare you to it, just to show you the shortness of your calculation. Trust me,"—there was a terrible distinctness in his utterance of these words—"trust me, that in all my dealings with the world, I have left very little at the discretion of what are called men of honour. I leave nothing, absolutely nothing, in the power of such as you."

At last did Linton strike the right chord of the fellow's nature; and in his subdued and crestfallen countenance might be read the signs of his prostration.

"Hear me now attentively, Keane, and let my words rest well in your memory. The trial comes on on the 15th: your evidence will be the most important of all; but give it with the reluctance of a man who shrinks from bringing his landlord to the scaffold. You understand me? Let everything you say show the desire to screen Mr. Cashel. Another point: affect not to know anything save what you actually saw. You never can repeat too often the words, 'I didn't see it.' This scrupulous reliance on eyesight imposes well upon a Jury. These are the only cautions I have to give you. Your own natural intelligence will supply the rest. When all is finished, you will come up to Dublin, and call at a certain address which will be given you hereafter. And now we part. It is your own fault if you lose a friend who never deserted the man that stood by him."

"An' are you going back to Dublin now, Sir?" asked Keane, over whose mind Linton's influence had become dominant, and who actually dreaded to be left alone, and without his guidance.

Linton nodded an assent.

"But you'll be down here at the trial, Sir?" asked Tom, eagerly.

"I suspect not," said Linton. "If not summoned as a witness, I'll assuredly not come."

"Oh, murther!" exclaimed Tom. "I thought I'd have you in the 'Coort, just to look up at you from time to time, to give me courage and make me feel bowld; for it does give me courage when I see you so calm and so azy, without as much as a tremble in your voice."

"It is not likely that I shall be there," rejoined Linton; "but mind, if I be, that you do *not* direct your eyes towards me. Remember, that every look you give, every gesture you make, will be watched and noted."

"I wondher how I'll get through it!" exclaimed the other, sorrowfully.

"You'll get through it admirably, man, if you'll only think that you are not the person in peril It is your conscience alone can bring you into any danger."

"Well, I hope so! with the help of——" The fellow stopped short, and a red flush of shame spread itself over features which in a whole lifelong had never felt a blush.

"I'd like to be able to give you something better than this, Tom," said Linton, as he placed a handful of loose silver in the other's palm "but it is safer for the present that you should not be seen with much money."

"I owe more than this at Mark Shea's 'public,'" said Tom, looking discontentedly at the money.

"And why should you owe it?" said Linton, bitterly. "What is there in your circumstances to warrant debts of this kind?"

"Didn't I earn it—tell me that?" asked the ruffian, with a savage earnestness.

"I see that you are hopeless," said Linton, turning away in disgust. "Take your own course, and see where it will lead you."

"No—you mean where it will lead us," said the fellow, insolently.

"What! do you dare to threaten me! Now, once for all, let this have an end. I have hitherto treated you with candour and with kindness. If you fancy that my hate can be more profitable than my friendship, say so, and before one hour passes over your head I'll have you committed to prison as an accessory to the murder."

"I ax your pardon humbly—I didn't mean to anger yer Honer," said the other, in a servile tone. "I'll do everything you bid me—and sure you know best what ought to be done."

"Then let us part good friends," said Linton, holding out his hand towards him. "I see a boat coming over the lake which will drop me at Killaloe; we must not be seen together—so good-by, Tom, good-by."

"Good-by, and a safe journey to yer Honer," said Tom, as, touching his hat respectfully, he retired into the wood.

The boat which Linton descried was still above a mile from the shore, and he sat down upon a stone to await its coming. Beautiful as that placid lake was, with its background of bold mountains, its scattered islands, and its jutting promontories, he had no eye for these, but followed with a peering glance the direction in which Tom Keane had departed.

"There are occasions," muttered he to himself, "when the boldest courses are the safest. Is this one of these? Dare I trust that fellow, or would this be better?" And, as if mechanically, he drew forth a double-barrelled pistol from his breast, and looked fixedly at it.

He arose from his seat, and sat down again—his mind seemed beset with hesitation and doubt; but the conflict did not last long, for he replaced the

weapon, and walking down to the lake, dipped his fingers in the water and bathed his temples, saying to himself:

"Better as it is: over-caution is as great an error as foolhardiness."

With a dexterity acquired by long practice, he now disguised his features so perfectly that none could have recognised him; and by the addition of a wig and whiskers of bushy red hair, totally changed the character of his appearance. This he did, that at any future period he might not be recognised by the boatmen, who, in answer to his signal, now pulled vigorously towards the shore.

He soon bargained with them to leave him at Killaloe, and as they rowed along engaged them to talk about the country, in which he affected to be a tourist. Of course the late murder was the theme uppermost in every mind, and Linton marked with satisfaction how decisively the current of popular belief ran in attributing the guilt to Cashel.

With a perversity peculiar to the peasant, the Agent, whom they had so often inveighed against for cruelty in his lifetime, they now discovered to have been the type of all that was kind-hearted and benevolent; and had no hesitation in attributing his unhappy fate to an altercation in which he, with too rash a zeal, was the "poor man's advocate."

The last words he was heard to utter on leaving Tubbermore were quoted, as implying a condemnation on Cashel's wasteful extravagance, at a time when the poor around were "perishing of hunger." Even to Linton, whose mind was but too conversant with the sad truths of the story, these narratives assumed the strongest form of consistency and likelihood; and he saw how effectually circumstantial evidence can convict a man in public estimation, long before a jury are sworn to try him.

Crimes of this nature, now, had not been unfrequent in that district; and the country people felt a species of savage vengeance in urging their accusations against a "Gentleman," who had not what they reckoned as the extenuating circumstances to diminish or explain away his guilt.

"He wasn't turned out of his little place to die on the road-side," muttered one. "He wasn't threatened, like poor Tom Keane, to be 'starminated,'" cried another.

"And who is Tom Keane?" asked Linton.

"The gatekeeper up at the big house yonder, Sir; one that's lived man and boy nigh fifty years there; and Mr. Cashel swore he'd root him out, for all that!"

"Ay!" chimed in another, in a moralising whine, "an see where he is himself, now!"

"I wondher now if they'd hang him, Sir?" asked one.

"Why not," asked Linton, "if he should be found guilty?"

"They say, Sir, the gentlemen can always pay for another man to be hanged instead of them. Musha, maybe 'tisn't true," added he, diffidently, as he saw the smile on Linton's face.

"I think you'll find that the right man will suffer in this case," said Linton; and a gleam of malignant passion shot from his dark eyes as he spoke.

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## CHAPTER LXIV.

### THE TRIAL—THE PROSECUTION.

As I listened I thought myself guilty.—WARREN HASTINGS.

For several days before that appointed for the trial of Roland Cashel, the assize town was crowded with visitors from every part of the island. No a house, not a room was unoccupied, so intense was the interest to witness a cause into which so many elements of exciting story entered. His great wealth, his boundless extravagance, the singular character of his early life, gave rise to a hundred curious anecdotes, which the press circulated with a most unscrupulous freedom.

Nor did public curiosity stop at the walls of the prison; for every detail of his life, since the day of his committal, was carefully recorded by the papers. The unbroken solitude in which he lived; the apparent calm collectedness in which he awaited his trial; his resolute refusal to employ legal assistance; his seeming indifference to the alleged clues to the discovery of the murder, were commented on and repeated till they formed the table-talk of the land.

The only person with whom he desired to communicate was Doctor Tiernay; but the Doctor had left Ireland in company with old Mr. Corrigan and Miss Leicester, and none knew whither they had directed their steps.

Of all his former friends and acquaintances, Cashel did not appear to remember one; nor, certainly, did they obtrude themselves in any way upon his recollection. The Public, it is true, occupied themselves abundantly with his interests. Letters, some with signatures, the greater number without, were addressed to him, containing advices and counsels the strangest and most opposite, and requests, which to one in his situation were the most

inappropriate. Exhortations to confess his crime came from some, evidently more anxious for the solution of a mystery than the repentance of a criminal. Some, suggested legal quibbles to be used at the trial; others, hinted at certain most skilful advocates, whose services had been crowned with success in the case of most atrocious wretches. A few, asked for autographs; and one, in a neat crowquill hand, with paper smelling strongly of musk, requested a lock of his hair!

If by any accident Cashel opened one of these epistles, he was certain to feel amused. It was, to him at least, a new view of life, and of that civilisation against which he now felt himself a rebel. Generally, however, he knew nothing of them: a careless indifference, a reckless disregard of the future, had taken complete possession of him; and the only impatience he ever manifested was at the slow march of the time which should elapse before the day of trial.

The day at length arrived; and even within the dreary walls of the prison were heard the murmured accents of excitement as the great hour drew nigh.

Mr. Goring at an early hour had visited the prisoner, to entreat him, for the last time, to abandon his mad refusal of legal aid; explaining forcibly that there were constantly cases occurring where innocence could only be asserted by disentangling the ingenious tissue with which legal astuteness can invest a circumstance. Cashel rejected this counsel calmly but peremptorily; and when pressed home by other arguments, in a moment of passing impatience confessed that he was "weary of life, and would make no effort to prolong it."

"Even so, Sir," said Goring. "There is here another question at issue. Are you satisfied to fill the dishonoured grave of a criminal? Does not the name by which men will speak of you hereafter possess any terror for you now?"

A slight tremor shook Cashel's voice as he replied, "Were I one who left kindred or attached friends behind him, these considerations would have their weight, nor would I willingly leave them the heritage of such disgrace; but I am alone in the world, without one to blush for my dishonour, or shed a tear over my sorrow. The calumny of my fellow-men will only fall on ears sealed by death; nor will their jeers break the slumber I am so soon to sleep."

Goring laboured hard to dissuade him from his resolve, but to no purpose. The only consolation of which Roland seemed capable arose from the dogged indifference he felt as to the result, and the consciousness of an innocence he was too proud to assert.

From an early hour of the morning the Court was crowded. Many per-

sons distinguished in the world of fashion were to be seen amid the gowned and wigged throng that filled the body of the building; and in the galleries were a vast number of ladies, whose elegance of dress told how much they regarded the scene as one of display, as well as of exciting interest. Some, had been frequent guests at his house; others, had often received him at their own; and there they sat, in eager expectancy to see how he would behave, to criticise his bearing, to scan his looks through their "*lorgnettes*," and note the accents in which he would speak. A few, indeed, of his more intimate friends denied themselves the treat such an exhibition promised; and it was plain to see how highly they estimated their own forbearance. Still, Frobisher and some of his set stood beneath the gallery, and watched the proceedings with interest.

Some routine business of an uninteresting nature over, the case of the King *versus* Roland Cashel was called, and the governor of the gaol was ordered to produce the prisoner. A murmur of intense interest quickly ran through the crowded assembly, and as suddenly was subdued to a dead silence as the crowd, separating, permitted the passage of two armed policemen, after whom Cashel walked, followed by two others. Scarcely had he merged from the dense throng and taken his place in the dock, when a buzz of astonishment went round; for the prisoner, instead of being dressed decorously in black, as is customary, or at least in some costume bespeaking care and respect, was attired in the very suit he wore on the eventful night of the murder, the torn sleeves and blood-stained patches attracting every eye around him. He was paler and thinner than his wont; and if his countenance was more deeply thoughtful, there was nothing in it that evinced anxiety, or even expectancy. As he entered the dock, they who stood nearest to him remarked that a slight flush stole over his face, and something that seemed painful to his feelings appeared to work within him. A brief effort overcame this, and he raised his eyes and carried his looks around the Court with the most perfect unconcern.

The prisoner was now arraigned, and the clerk proceeded to read over the indictment; after which came the solemn question, "How say you, prisoner, Guilty or Not Guilty?" Either not understanding the "quære" as directly addressed to himself, or conceiving it to be some formality not requiring an answer, Cashel stood in a calm and respectful silence for some minutes, when the Judge, in a mild voice, explained the meaning of the interrogation.

"Not Guilty, my Lord," said Cashel, promptly; and though the words were few, and those almost of course on such an occasion, the feeling in the Court was manifestly in concurrence with the speaker. The routine detail of calling over the jury panel involving the privilege of "challenge," it

became necessary to explain this to Cashel, whose ignorance of all legal forms being now so manifest, the Judge asked who was counsel for the prisoner.

"He has not named any, my Lord."

With patient kindness the Judge turned to the dock, and counselled him, even now, late as it was, to select some one among the learned members of the bar, whose guidance would materially serve his interests, and save him from the many embarrassments his own unassisted efforts would produce.

"I thank you, my Lord, for your consideration," replied he, calmly, "but if I be innocent of this crime, I stand in need of no skill to defend me. If guilty, I do not deserve it."

"Were guilt and innocence always easy of detection," said the Judge, "your remark might have some show of reason; but such is rarely the case; and once more I would entreat you to entrust your cause to some one conversant with our forms and acquainted with our duties."

"I am not guilty, my Lord," replied Roland, boldly, "nor do I fear that any artifice can make me appear such. I will not have counsel."

The Attorney-General here in a low voice addressed the Bench, and suggested that although the prisoner might not himself select a defender, yet the interests of justice, generally, requiring that the witnesses should be cross-examined, it would be well if the Court would appoint some one to that duty.

The Judge repeated the suggestion aloud, adding his perfect concurrence in its nature, and inviting the learned bar to lend a volunteer in the cause; when a voice called out, "I will willingly accept the office, my Lord, with your permission."

"Very well, Mr. Clare Jones," replied the Judge; and that gentleman, of whom so long we have lost sight, advanced to the front of the bar, beside the dock.

Cashel, during this scene, appeared like one totally uninterested in all that was going forward; nor did he even turn his head towards where his self-appointed advocate was standing. As the names of the jury were called over, Jones closely scrutinised each individual, keenly inquiring from what part of the county he came — whether he had resided as a tenant on the Cashel estate—and if he had, on any occasion, expressed himself strongly on the guilt or innocence of the accused. To all these details Roland listened with an interest the novelty suggested, but, it was plain to see, without any particle of that feeling which his own position might have called for. The jury were at length empannelled, and the trial began.

Few, even among the most accomplished weaver of narrative, can equal

the skill with which a clever lawyer details the story of a criminal trial. The orderly sequence in which the facts occur—the neat equipoise in which matters are weighed—the rigid insistance upon some points, the insinuated probabilities and the likelihood of others—are all arranged and combined with a masterly power that more discursive fancies would fail in.

Events and incidents that to common intelligence appear to have no bearing on the case, arise, like unexpected witnesses, at intervals, to corroborate this, or to insinuate that. Time, place, distance, locality, the laws of light and sound, the phenomena of science, are all invoked, not with the abstruse pedantry of a bookworm, but with the ready-witted acuteness of one who has studied mankind in the parti-coloured page of real life.

To any one unaccustomed to these efforts, the effect produced is almost miraculous: conviction steals in from so many sources, that the mind, like a city assaulted on every side, is captured almost at once. All the force of cause and effect is often imparted to matters which are merely consecutive; and it requires patient consideration to disembarrass a case of much that is merely insinuated, and more that is actually speculative.

In the present instance everything was circumstantial; but so much the more did it impress all who listened, even to him who, leaning on the rails of the dock, now heard with wonderment how terribly consistent were all the events which seemed to point him out as guilty.

After a brief exordium, in which he professed his deep sorrow at the duty which had devolved on him, and his ardent desire to suffer nothing to escape him with reference to the prisoner save what the interests of truth and justice imperatively might call for, the Attorney-General entered upon a narrative of the last day of Mr. Kennyfeck's life; detailing with minute precision his departure from Tubbermore at an early hour in Mr. Cashel's company, and stating how something bordering upon altercation between them was overheard by the bystanders as they drove away. "The words themselves, few and unimportant as they might seem," added he, "under common circumstances, come before us with a terrible significance when remembered in connexion with the horrible event that followed." He then traced their course to Drumcoologan, where differences of opinion, trivial, some might call them, but of importance to call for weighty consideration here, repeatedly occurred respecting the tenantry and the management of the estate. These would all be proved by competent witnesses, he alleged; and he desired the Jury to bear in mind that such testimony should be taken as that of men much more disposed to think and speak well of Mr. Cashel, whose very spendthrift tastes had the character of virtues in the peasants' eyes, in contrast with the careful and more scrupulous discretion practised by "the agent,"

"You will be told, Gentlemen of the Jury," continued he, "how, after a day spent in continued differences of opinion, they separated at evening; one, to return to Tubbermore by the road; the other, by the less travelled path that led over the mountains. And here it is worthy of remark that Mr. Cashel, although ignorant of the way, a stranger, for the first time in his life in the district, positively refuses all offers of accompaniment, and will not even take a guide to show him the road. Mr. Kennyfeck continues for some time to transact business with the tenantry, and leaves Drumcoologan, at last, just as night was closing in. Now, about half-way between the manor-house of Tubbermore and the village of Drumcoologan, the road has been so much injured by the passage of a mountain-torrent, that when the travellers passed in the morning they found themselves obliged to descend from the carriage and proceed for some distance on foot; a precaution that Mr. Kennyfeck was compelled also to take on his return, ordering the servant to wait for him on the crest of the hill. That spot he was never destined to reach! The groom waited long and anxiously for his coming; he could not leave his horses to go back and find out the reasons of his delay—he was alone; the distance to Tubbermore was too great to permit of his proceeding thither to give the alarm; he waited, therefore, with that anxiety which the sad condition of our country is but too often calculated to inspire even among the most courageous: when, at last, footsteps were heard approaching—he called out aloud his master's name—but, instead of hearing the well-known voice in answer, he was accosted in Irish by an old man, who told him, in the forcible accents of his native tongue, 'that a murdered man was lying on the road-side.' The groom at once hurried back, and at the foot of the ascent discovered the lifeless but still warm body of his master; a bullet-wound was found in the back of the skull, and the marks of some severe blows across the face. On investigating further, at a little distance off, a pistol was picked up from a small drain, where it seemed to have been thrown in haste; the bore corresponded exactly with the bullet taken from the body; but more important still, this pistol appears to be the fellow of another belonging to Mr. Cashel, and will be identified by a competent witness as having been his property.

"An interval now occurs, in which a cloud of mystery intervenes; and we are unable to follow the steps of the prisoner, of whom nothing is known, till, on the alarm of the murder reaching Tubbermore, a rumour runs that footsteps have been heard in Mr. Cashel's apartment, the key of which the owner had taken with him. The report gains currency rapidly that it is Mr. Cashel himself; and although the servants aver that he never could have traversed the hall and the staircase unseen by some of them, a

new discovery appears to explain the fact. It is this. The ivy which grew on the wall of the house, and which reached to the window of Mr. Cashel's dressing-room, is found torn down, and indicating the passage of some one by its branches. On the discovery of this most important circumstance, the Chief Justice, accompanied by several other gentlemen, proceeded in a body to the chamber, and demanded admittance. From them you will hear in detail what took place—the disorder in which they found the apartment—heaps of papers littered the floor—letters lay in charred masses upon the hearth—the glass of the window was broken, and the marks of feet upon the window-sill and the floor showed that some one had entered by that means. Lastly—and to this fact you will give your utmost attention—the prisoner himself is found with his clothes torn in several places; marks of blood are seen upon them, and his wrist shows a recent wound, from which the blood flows profusely. Although cautioned by the wise foresight of the learned judge against any rash attempt at explanation, or any inadvertent admission which might act to his prejudice hereafter, he bursts orth into a violent invective upon the murderer, and suggests that they should mount their horses at once, and scour the country in search of him. This counsel being, for obvious reasons, rejected, and his plan of escape frustrated, he falls into a moody despondency, and will not speak. Shrouding himself in an affected misanthropy, he pretends to believe that he is the victim of some deep-planned treachery—that all these circumstances, whose detail I have given you, have been the deliberate schemes of his enemies. It is difficult to accept of this explanation, Gentlemen of the Jury; and, although I would be far from diminishing in the slightest the grounds of any valid defence a man so situated may take up, I would caution you against any rash credulity of vague and unsupported assertions; or, at least, to weigh them well against the statements of truth-telling witnesses. The prisoner is bound to lay before you a narrative of that day, from the hour of his leaving home, to that of his return;—to explain why he separated from his companion, and came back alone by a path he had never travelled before, and at night;—with what object he entered his own house by the window—a feat of considerable difficulty and of some danger. His disordered and blood-stained dress—his wounded hand—the missing pistol—the agitation of his manner when discovered amid the charred and torn remains of letters—all these have to be accounted for. And remember at what a moment they occurred! When his house was the scene of festivity and rejoicing—when above a thousand guests were abandoning themselves to the unbridled enjoyment of pleasure—this is the time the host takes to arrange papers, to destroy letters—to make, in fact, those hurried arrangements that men are driven to on the eve of either flight or some desperate

undertaking. Bear all this in mind, Gentlemen and remember that, to explain these circumstances, the narrative of the prisoner must be full, coherent, and consistent in all its parts. The Courts of Justice admit of neither reservations nor mysteries. We are here to investigate the truth, whose cause admits of no compromise."

The witnesses for the prosecution were now called over and sworn. The first examined were some of the servants who had overheard the conversation between Cashel and Kennyfeck on the morning of leaving Tubbermore. They differed slightly as to the exact expressions used, but agreed perfectly as to their general import: a fact which even the cross-examination of Mr. Jones only served to strengthen. Some peasants of Drumcoologan were next examined, to show that during the day slight differences were constantly occurring between the parties, and that Cashel had more than once made use of the expression, "Have your own way *now*, but ere long I'll take mine;" or words very similar.

The old man who discovered the body, and the postilion, were then questioned as to all the details of the place, the hour, and the fact; and then Tom Keane was called for. It was by him the pistol was picked up from the drain. The air of reluctance with which the witness ascended the table, and the look of affectionate interest he bestowed upon the dock, were remarked by the whole assemblage. If the countenance of the man evinced little of frankness or candour, the stealthy glance he threw around him as he took his seat showed that he was not deficient in cunning.

As his examination proceeded, the dogged reluctance of his answers, the rugged bluntness by which he avoided any clear explanation of his meaning, were severely commented on by the Attorney-General, and even called forth the dignified censure of the Bench; so that the impression produced by his evidence was, that he was endeavouring throughout to screen his landlord from the imputation of a well-merited guilt.

The cross-examination now opened, but without in any way serving to shake the material character of the testimony, at the same time that it placed in a still stronger light the attachment of the witness to the prisoner. Cashel, hitherto inattentive and indifferent to all that was going forward, became deeply interested as this examination proceeded; his features, apathetic and heavy before, grew animated and eager, and he leaned forward to hear the witness with every sign of anxiety.

The spectators who thronged the Court attributed the prisoner's eagerness to the important nature of the testimony, and the close reference it bore to the manner of the crime; they little knew the simple truth, that it was the semblance of affection for him—the pretended interest in his fate—which touched his lonely heart, and kindled there a love of life.

"That poor peasant, then," said Roland to himself, "he, at least, deems me guiltless. I did not think that there lived one who cared as much for me!"

With the apparent intention of showing to the Court and Jury that Keane was not biased towards his former master, Mr. Jones addressed several questions to him; but instead of eliciting the fact, they called forth from the witness a burst of gratitude and love for him that actually shook the building by the applause it excited, and called for the interference of the Bench to repress.

"You may go down, Sir," said Jones, with the fretful impatience of a man worsted in a controversy; and the witness descended from the table amid the scarcely suppressed plaudits of the crowd. As he passed the dock, Cashel leaned forward and extended his hand towards him. The fellow drew back, and they who were next him perceived that a sallow sickly colour spread itself over his face, and that his lips became bloodless.

"Give me your hand, man!" said Cashel.

"Oh, Mr. Cashel! oh, Sir!" said he, with that whining affectation of modesty the peasant can so easily assume.

"Give me your hand, I say," said Cashel, firmly. "Its honest grasp will make me think better of the world than I have done for many a day."

The fellow made the effort, but with such signs of inward terror and trepidation that he seemed like one ready to faint; and when his cold and nerveless hand quitted Cashel's, it fell powerless to his side. He moved now quickly forward, and was soon lost to sight in the dense throng.

The next witnesses examined were the group who, headed by the Chief Justice, had entered Cashel's room. If they all spoke guardedly, and with great reserve, as to the manner of the prisoner, and the construction they would feel disposed to put upon the mode in which he received them, they agreed as to every detail and every word spoken with an accuracy that profoundly impressed the Jury.

The magistrate, Mr. Goring, as having taken the most active part in the proceedings, was subjected to a long and searching cross-examination by Jones; who appeared to imply that some private source of dislike to Cashel had been the animating cause of his zeal in this instance.

Although not a single fact arose to give a shade of colour to this suspicion, the lawyer clang to it with the peculiar pertinacity that often establishes by persistance when it fails in proof; and so pointedly and directly at last, that the learned Judge felt bound to interfere, and observe, that nothing in the testimony of the respected witness could lay any ground for the insinuation thrown out by the counsel.

Upon this there ensued one of those sharp altercations between Bench and Bar which seem the "complement" of every eventful trial in Ireland; and which, after a brief contest, usually leave both the combatants excessively in the wrong.

The present case was no exception to this rule. The Judge was heated and imperious—the Counsel flippant in all the insolence of mock respect—and ended by the stereotyped panegyric on the "glorious sanctity that invests the counsel of a defence in a criminal action—the inviolability of a pledge which no member of the bar could suffer to be sullied in his person"—and a great many similar fine things, which, if not "briefed" by the attorney, are generally paid for by the client! The skrimmage ended, as it ever does, by a salute of honour; in which each, while averring that he was incontestably right, bore testimony to the conscientious scruples and delicate motives of the other; and at last they bethought them of the business for which they were there, and of him whose fate for life or death was on the issue. The examination of Mr. Goring was renewed.

"You have told us, Sir," said Jones, "that immediately after the terrible tidings had reached Tubbermore of Mr. Kennyfeck's death, suspicion seemed at once to turn on Mr. Cashel. Will you explain this, or at least let us hear how you can account for a circumstance so strange?"

"I did not say as much as you have inferred," replied Goring. "I merely observed that Mr. Cashel's name became most singularly mixed up with the event, and rumours of a difference between him and his agent were buzzed about."

"Might not this mention of Mr. Cashel's name have proceeded from an anxious feeling on the part of his friends to know of his safety?"

"It might."

"Are you not certain that it was so?"

"In one instance, certainly. I remember that a gentleman at once drew our attention to the necessity of seeing after him."

"Who was this gentleman?"

"Mr. Linton—a near and intimate friend of Mr. Cashel."

"And he suggested that it would be proper to take steps for Mr. Cashel's safety?"

"He did so."

"Was anything done in consequence of that advice?"

"Nothing, I believe. The state of confusion that prevailed—the terror that pervaded every side—the dreadful scenes enacting around us, prevented our following up the matter with all the foresight which might be desired."

"And, in fact, you sought relief from the unsettled distraction of your thoughts, by fixing the crime upon some one—even though he should prove, of all assembled there, the least likely?"

"We did not attach anything to Mr. Cashel's disfavour until we discovered that he was in his dressing-room, and in the manner already stated."

"But you certainly jumped to your conclusion by a sudden bound?"

"It would be fairer to say that our thoughts converged to the same impression at the same time."

"Where is this Mr. Linton? Is he among the list of your witnesses, Mr. Attorney?"

"No, we have not called him."

"I thought as much!" said Jones, sneeringly; "and yet the omission is singular, of one whose name is so frequently mixed up in these proceedings. He might prove an inconvenient witness."

A slight murmur here ran through the Court; and a gentleman, advancing to the bar, whispered some words to the Attorney-General, who, rising, said:

"My Lord, I am just this instant informed that Mr. Linton is dangerously ill of fever at his house near Dublin. My informant adds, that no hopes are entertained of his recovery."

"Was he indisposed at the period in which my learned friend drew up this case? or was there any intention of summoning him here for examination?" asked Jones.

"We did not require Mr. Linton's testimony," replied the Attorney-General.

"It can scarcely be inferred that we feared it," said a junior barrister, "since the first palpable evidences that implicated the prisoner were discovered by Mr. Linton: the wadding of the pistol—part of a letter in Mr. Cashel's own handwriting—and the tracks corresponding with his boots."

"This is all most irregular, my Lord," broke in Jones, eagerly. "Here are statements thrown out in all the loose carelessness of conversation, totally unsupported by evidence. I submit that it is impossible to offer a defence to a cause conducted in this manner."

"You are quite right, Mr. Jones; this is not evidence."

"But this is, my Lord!" said the Attorney-General, in a heated manner; "and for motives of delicacy we might not have used it, if not driven to this course by the insinuations of counsel. Here is a note in pencil, dated from the 'Pass of Ennismore,' and running thus: 'It looks badly; but I fear you have no other course than to arrest him. In fact, it is too late for any-

thing else. Consult Malone and Meek.' And this can be proved to be in Mr. Linton's handwriting."

Mr. Clare Jones did not speak a word as the note was handed up to the Bench, and then to the Jury-box; he even affected to think it of no importance, and did not deign to examine it for himself.

"You may go down, Mr. Goring," said he, after a slight pause, in which he appeared deliberating what course to follow.

Making his way to the side of the dock, Jones addressed himself to Cashel in a low, cautious voice:

"It now remains with you, Mr. Cashel, to decide whether you will entrust me with the facts on which you ground your innocence, or prefer to see yourself overwhelmed by adverse testimony."

Cashel made no reply, but leaned his head on his hand in deep thought.

"Have you any witnesses to call?" whispered Jones. "Shall we try an *alibi?*"

Cashel did not answer.

"What is your defence, Sir, in one word?" asked Jones, shortly.

"I am not guilty," said Cashel, slowly; "but I do not expect others to believe me so."

"Is your defence to rest upon that bare assertion?" asked the lawyer; but Roland did not seem to heed the question, as, folding his arms, he stood erect in the dock, his attention to all appearance bestowed upon the ceremonial of the Court.

Jones, at once turning to the Bench, expressed his regret that, neither being able, from the shortness of the time, to obtain proper information on the case, nor being honoured by the confidence of the accused, he must decline the task of commenting on the evidence; and would only entreat the Jury to weigh the testimony they had heard with a merciful disposition, and wherever discrepancies and doubts occurred, to give the full benefit of such to the prisoner.

"You have no witnesses to call?" asked the Judge.

"I am told there are none, my Lord," said Jones, with an accent of resignation.

A brief colloquy, in a low voice, ensued between the Crown lawyers and Clare Jones, when, at length, a well-known barrister rose to address the Jury for the prosecution. The gentleman who now claimed the attention of the Court was one who, not possessing either the patient habits of study, or that minute attention to technical detail which constitute the legal mind, was a fluent, easy speaker, with an excellent memory, and a thorough knowledge of the stamp and temperament of the men that usually fill a Jury-box. He

was eminently popular with that class, on whom he had often bestowed all the flatteries of his craft; assuring them that their "order" was the bone and sinew of the land, and that "our proudest boast as a nation was in the untitled nobility of commerce."

His whole address on the present occasion tended to show that the murder of Mr. Kennyfeck was one among the many instances of the unbridled licence and tyranny assumed by the aristocracy over the middle ranks.

Mr. Kennyfeck was no bad subject for such eulogium as he desired to bestow. He was the father of a family—a well-known citizen of Dublin—a grave, white-cravated, pompous man, of respectable exterior, always seen at vestries, and usually heading the lists of public charities. Cashel was the very antithesis to all this: the reckless squanderer of accidentally acquired wealth—the wayward and spoiled child of fortune, with the tastes of a Buccaneer, and the means of a Prince, suddenly thrown into the world of fashion. What a terrible ordeal to a mind so untrained—to temper so unbridled! and how fearfully had it told upon him! After commenting upon the evidence, and showing in what a continuous chain each event was linked with the other—how consistent were all—how easily explicable every circumstance, he remarked that the whole case had but one solitary difficulty; and although that was one which weighed more in a moral than a legal sense, it required that he should dwell a few moments upon it.

"The criminal law of our land, Gentlemen of the Jury, is satisfied with the facts which establish guilt or innocence, without requiring that the motives of accused parties should be too closely scrutinised. Crime consists, of course, of the spirit in which a guilty action is done; but the law wisely infers that a guilty act is the evidence of a guilty spirit; and therefore, although there may be circumstances to extenuate the criminality of an act, the offence before the law is the same; and the fact, the great fact, that a man has killed his fellow-man, is what constitutes murder.

"I have said that this case has but one difficulty; and that is, the possible motive which could have led to the fatal act. Now, this would present itself as a considerable obstacle if the relations between the parties were such as we happily witness them in every county of this island, where the proprietor and his agent are persons linked, by the sacred obligation of duty, and the frequent intercourse of social life, into the closest friendship.

"That blood should stain the bonds of such brotherhood would be scarcely credible—and even when credible, inexplicable; it would be repugnant to all our senses to conceive an act so unnatural. But was the present a similar case? or rather, was it one exactly the opposite? You have heard that repeated differences occurred between the parties, amounting even to alterca-

tions. Mr. Hoare's evidence has shown you that Mr. Cashel's extravagance had placed him in difficulties of no common kind; his demands for money were incessant, and the utter disregard of the cost of obtaining it is almost beyond belief. The exigence on one side, the manly resistance on the other, must have led to constant misunderstanding. But these were not the only circumstances that contributed to a feeling of estrangement, soon to become something still more perilous. And here I pause to ask myself how far I am warranted in disclosing facts of a private nature, although in their bearing they have an important relation to the case before us! It is a question of great delicacy; and were it not that the eternal interests of Truth and Justice transcend all others, I might shrink from the performance of a task which, considered in a merely personal point of view, is deeply distressing. But it is not of one so humble as myself of whom there is a question here: the issue is, whether a man's blood should be spilled, and no expiation be made for it?"

The counsel after this entered into a discursive kind of narrative of Cashel's intimacy with the Kennyfeck family, with whom he had been for a time domesticated; and after a mass of plausible generalities, wound up by an imputed charge that he had won the affections of the younger daughter, who, with the consent of her parents, was to become his wife.

"It will not seem strange to you, Gentlemen," said he, "that I have not called to that table as a witness either the widow or the orphan to prove these facts, or that I have not subjected their sacred sorrows to the rude assaults of a cross-examination. You will not think the worse of me for this reserve: nor shall I ask of you to give my statements the value of sworn evidence: you will hear them, and decide what value they possess in leading you to a true understanding of this case.

"I have said, that if a regular pledge and promise of marriage did not bind the parties, something which is considered equivalent among persons of honour did exist, and that by their mutual acquaintances they were regarded as contracted to each other. Mr. Cashel made her splendid and expensive presents, which had never been accepted save for the relations between them; he distinguished her on all occasions by exclusive attention, and among his friends he spoke of his approaching marriage as a matter fixed and determined on. In this state of things a discovery took place, which at once served to display the character of the young gentleman, and to rescue the family from one of the very deepest, because one of the most irremediable, of all calamities. Information reached them, accompanied by such circumstances as left no doubt of its veracity, that this Mr. Cashel had been married already, and that his wife, a young Spanish lady, was still alive and residing at the Havannah.

"I leave you to imagine the misery which this sad announcement produced in that circle, where, until he entered it, happiness had never been disturbed. It is not necessary that I should dwell upon the distress this cruel treachery produced: with its consequences alone we have any concern here; and these were a gradual estrangement—a refusal, calm but firm, to receive Mr. Cashel as before; an intimation that they knew of circumstances which, from delicacy to him, they would never advert to openly, but which must at once bar all the contemplated relations: and, to this sad, humiliating alternative he submitted!

"To avoid the slanderous stories which gossip would be certain to put in circulation, they did not decline the invitation they had before accepted to visit Tubbermore: they came, however, under the express stipulation that no close intimacy was ever to be resumed between Mr. Cashel and themselves; he was not even to use the common privilege of a host—to visit them in their own apartments. That this degree of cold distance was maintained between them, on every occasion, all the guests assembled at the house can testify; and he neither joined their party in carriage nor on horseback. Perhaps, this interdiction was carried out with too rigid a discipline; perhaps, the cold reserve they maintained had assumed a character of insult, to one whose blood still glowed with the fire of southern associations; perhaps, some circumstance with which we are unacquainted contributed to render this estrangement significant, and consequently painful to a man who could not brook the semblance of a check. It is needless to ask how or whence originating, since we can see in the fact itself cause sufficient for indignant reproof on one side, for a wounded self-love and tarnished honour on the other.

"Are we at a loss for such motives, then, in the presence of facts like these? Ask yourselves, Is a man, bred and trained up in all the riotous freedom of a service scarcely above the rank of piracy—accustomed to the lawless licence of a land where each makes the law with his own right hand—is such a man one to bear a slight with patient submission, or to submit to an open shame in tame obedience? Can you not easily imagine how all the petty differences of opinion they might have had were merely skirmishes in front of that line where deeper and graver feelings stood in battle array? Can you suppose that, however ruled over by the ordinary courtesies of life, this youth nourished his plans of ultimate revenge, not only upon those who refused with indignation his traitorous alliance, but who were the depositary of a secret that must interdict all views of marriage in any other quarter?"

## CHAPTER LXV.

### THE DEFENCE.

Equal to either fortune.—Eugene Aram.

As the Crown Counsel sat down, a low murmur ran through the Court, whose meaning it would be difficult to define; for, if the greater number present were carried away by the indignant eloquence of the pleader to believe Cashel a hardened criminal, some few still seemed to cling to his side, and bent their eyes towards the dock with looks of sympathy and comfort. And oh! how little know they, whose eyes are beaming with the bright spark that warms their generous hearts, what loadstars are they to him who stands alone, forsaken, and accused in the criminal dock! What a resting-place does the weary and tired soul feel that glance of kindly meaning! How does it speak to his bruised and wounded spirit of hope and charity! What energy will it impart to the fast-failing courage! what self-respect and self-reliance to him who, a few moments back, was sinking beneath the abasement of despair!

Such was the effect now produced upon Roland Cashel. The array of circumstances, so formidably marshalled by his accuser, had completely overwhelmed him; the consciousness of innocence failed to support him against the feeling which he saw spreading like a mist around him. Against the accusation—against its fearful penalty—his own stout heart could sustain him; but how bear up against the contempt and the abhorrence of his fellow-men! Under the crushing weight of this shame he was sinking fast, when a stray glance—a chance expression of interest, like sunlight piercing a dark cloud—gave promise that all was not lost. He felt that here were yet some who wished to believe him guiltless, and that all sympathy for him had not yet died out.

"Does the prisoner desire to avail himself of the privilege he possesses to call witnesses to character?" asked the Judge.

"No, my Lord," said Cashel, firmly, but respectfully. "Since my accession to fortune, my life has been passed for the most part in what is called the 'fashionable world;' and, from what I have seen of it, the society does not seem rich in those persons whose commendations, were they to give them, would weigh heavily with your Lordship. Besides, they could say

little to my praise, which the learned counsel has not already said to my disparagement—that I had the command of wealth, and squandered it without taste and without credit."

Few and insignificant as were these words, the easy and fearless mode of their delivery, the manly energy of him who spoke them, seemed to produce a most favourable impression throughout the Court, which as rapidly reacted upon Cashel; for now the embers of hope were fanned, and already glowed into a slight flicker.

"The prisoner having waived his privilege, my Lord," said the Attorney-General, "I beg to observe that the case is now closed."

"Is it too late, then, my Lord, for me to address a few words to the Jury?" asked Roland, calmly.

"What say you, Mr. Attorney-General?" asked the Judge.

"Your Lordship knows far better than I, that to address the Court at this stage of the proceedings, would be to concede the right of reply—and, in fact, of speaking twice; since the prisoner's not having availed himself of the fitting occasion to comment on the evidence, gives him not the slightest pretension to usurp another one."

"Such is the law of the case," said the Judge, solemnly.

"I have nothing to observe against it, my Lord," said Cashel. "If I have not availed myself of the privilege accorded to men placed as I am, I must only submit to the penalty my pride has brought upon me—for it was pride, my Lord. Since that, however, another, and I hope a higher pride has animated me, to vindicate my character and my fame; so that, at some future day—a long future it may be—when the true facts of this dark mystery shall be brought to light, a more cautious spirit will pervade men's minds as to the guilt of him assailed by circumstantial evidence. It might be, my Lord, that all I could adduce in my own behalf would weigh little against the weight of accusations, which even to myself appear terribly consistent. I know, for I feel, how hard it would be to accept the cold unsupported narrative of a prisoner, in which many passages might occur of doubtful probability, some of even less credit, and some again of an obscurity to which even he himself could not afford the clue; and yet, with all these difficulties, enhanced tenfold by my little knowledge of the forms of a Court, and my slender capacity, I regret, my Lord, that I am unable to address the few words I had intended to the Jury—less, believe me, to avert the shipwreck that awaits myself, than to be a beacon to some other who may be as solitary and unfriended as I am."

These words, delivered with much feeling, but in a spirit of calm determination, seemed to thrill through the entire assemblage; and even the

senior Judge stopped to confer for some minutes with his brother on the bench, in evident hesitation what course to adopt. At length he said,

"However we may regret the course you have followed in thus depriving yourself of that legitimate defence the constitution of our country provides, we see no sufficient reason to deviate from the common order of proceeding in like cases. I will now, therefore, address the Jury, who have already heard your words, and will accord them any consideration they may merit."

"It may be, my Lord," said Cashel, "that evidence so strongly imbued with probability may induce the gentlemen in that box to believe me guilty; in which case, I understand, your Lordship would address to me the formal question, 'If I had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon me.' Now, if I am rightly informed, any observations of a prisoner at such a moment are regarded rather in the light of petitions for mercy, than as explanations or corrections of falsehood. I have, therefore, only now to say, that, whatever decision you may come to, the Court shall not be troubled further with interference of mine."

The Judge bowed slightly, as if in reply to this, and began his charge; but the Foreman of the Jury, leaning forward, said that his fellow-jurors had desired him to ask, as a favour to themselves, that the prisoner might be heard. A short conference ensued between the Bench and the Crown Counsel, which ended by the permission being accorded; and now Cashel rose to address the Court.

"I will not," said he, "abuse the time of this Court by any irrelevant matter, nor will I advert to a single circumstance foreign to the substance of the charge against me. I purpose simply to give a narrative of the last day I passed with my poor friend, and to leave on record this detail as the solemn protestation of innocence of one who has too little to live for to fear death."

With this brief preface he began a regular history of that eventful day, from the hour he had started from Tubbermore in company with Mr. Kennyfeck.

The reader is already familiar with every step and circumstance of that period, so that it is not necessary we should weary him by any recapitulation; enough if we say that Cashel proceeded, with a minuteness devoid of all prolixity, to mention each fact as it occurred, commenting as he went on upon the evidence already given, and explaining its import without impugning its truth. Juries are ever disposed to listen favourably to a speaker who brings to his aid no other allies than candour and frankness, and who, without pretensions to legal acuteness, narrates facts with clear

and distinctive precision. Leaving him, therefore, still speaking, and the irresistible force of truth gradually winning upon his hearers, let us quit the Court for a brief time, and passing through the crowded space before the doors, traverse the town, densely thronged by curious and eager visitors. We do not mean to linger with them, nor overhear the comments they passed upon the eventful scene beside them: our business is about a mile off, at a small public-house at a short distance from the road-side, usually frequented by cattle-dealers and the customers at the weekly markets. Here, in a meanly-furnished room, where, for it was now evening, a common dip candle shed its lugubrious yellow light upon the rude appliances of vulgar life, sat a man, whose eager expectancy was marked in every line of his figure. Every now and then he would arise from his chair, and, screening the candle from the wind, open the window to look out.

The night was dark and gusty: drifting rain beat at intervals against the glass, and seemed the forerunner of a greater storm. The individual we have spoken of did not seem to care for, if he even noticed, the inclemency; he brushed the wet from his bushy beard and moustaches with indifference, and bent his ear to listen to the sounds upon the road in deepest earnestness At last the sound of horses' feet and wheels was heard rapidly approaching, and a car drove up to the door, from which a man, wrapped up in a loose frieze coat, descended, and quickly mounted the stairs. As he reached the landing, the door of the room was thrown wide, and the other man, in a low, but distinct voice, said, "Well, what news?"

"All right," said he of the frieze coat, as, throwing off the wet garment, he discovered the person of Mr. Clare Jones. "Nothing could possibly go better; my cross-examination clinched Keane's evidence completely, and no Jury could get over it."

"I almost wish you had let him alone," said the other, gruffly, and in evident discontent; "I foresee that the sympathy the scoundrel affected will be troublesome to us yet."

"I have no fears on that head," replied the other, confidently. "The facts are there, and Crankle's speech to evidence ripped him up in a terrific manner."

"Did he allude to the Spanish girl?"

"He did, and with great effect."

"And the Kilgoff affair—did he bring 'My Lady' up for judgment?"

"No. The Attorney-General positively forbade all allusion to that business.'

"Oh, indeed!" said the other, with a savage sneer, "'The Court' was too sacred for such profanation."

"I think he was right, too," said Jones. "The statement could never have been brought to bear upon the case before the Court. It would have been a mere episode outside of the general history, and just as likely impress the Jury with the opinion that all the charges were trumped up to gain a conviction in any way."

The other paused, and seemed to reflect for some minutes, when he said, "Well, and what are they at now?"

"When I left, the Court had just refused Cashel's demand to address the Jury. The Chief Baron had ruled against him, and, of course, the charge is now being pronounced. As I knew how this must run, I took the opportunity of coming over here to see you."

"*My* name was but once mentioned, you tell me," said the other, in an abrupt manner.

"It was stated that you were dangerously ill, without hope of recovery," said Jones, faltering, and with evident awkwardness.

"And not alluded to again?" asked the other, whom there is no need of calling Mr. Linton.

"Yes, once—passingly," said Jones, still faltering.

"How do you mean, passingly?" asked Linton, in anger.

"The Crown Lawyers brought forward that note of yours from Ennismore."

Linton dashed his closed fist against the table, and uttered a horrible and blasphemous oath.

"Some bungling of yours, I'll be sworn, brought this about," said he, savagely; "some piece of that adroit chicanery that always recoils upon its projector."

"I'll not endure this language, Sir," said Jones. "I have done more to serve you than any man would have stooped to in my profession. Unsay these words."

"I do unsay them—I ask pardon for them, my dear Jones. I never meant them seriously," said Linton, in that fawning tone he could so well assume. "You ought to know me better than to think that *I*, who have sworn solemnly to make your fortune, could entertain such an opinion of you. Tell me now of this. Did Cashel say anything as the note was read?"

"Not a syllable."

"How did he look?"

"He smiled slightly."

"Ah, he smiled!" said Linton, growing pale; "he smiled! He can do that when he is most determined."

"What avails all his determination now? No narrative of his can

shake the testimony which the cross-examination has confirmed. It was a masterstroke of yours, Mr. Linton, to think of supplying him with counsel."

Linton smiled superciliously, as though he was accustomed to higher flights of treachery than this. "So then," said he, at length, "you say the case is strong against him?"

"It could scarcely be stronger."

"And the feeling—how is the feeling of the Court?"

"Variable, I should say; in the galleries, and among the fashionably-dressed part of the assemblage, inclined somewhat in his favour."

"How? Did not the charge of attempted bigamy tell against him with his fair allies?"

"Not so much as I had hoped."

"What creatures women are!" said Linton, holding up his hands. "And how are they betting? What says Frobisher?"

"He affects to think it no case for odds; he says there's a little fellow in the Jury-box never was known to say 'Guilty.'"

"A scheme to win money—a stale trick, my Lord Charles!" muttered Linton, contemptuously; "but I've no objection to hedge a little, for all that."

"I must be going," said Jones, looking at his watch; "the charge will soon be over, and I must look to the proceedings."

"Will they be long in deliberation, think you?" asked Linton.

"I suspect not; they are all weary and tired. It is now ten o'clock."

"I thought it later," said Linton, thoughtfully; "time lags heavily with him whose mind is in expectancy. Hark! there is some one below talking of the trial!" He opened the door to listen. "What says he?"

"He speaks of Cashel as still addressing the Court. Can they have consented to hear him after all?"

A fearful curse broke from Linton, and he closed the door noiselessly.

"See to this, Jones; see to it speedily. My mind misgives me that something will go wrong."

"You say that you know him thoroughly, and that he never would——"

"No, no," broke in Linton, passionately; "he'll not break one tittle of his word, even to save his life! When he promised me that all should be secret between us, he made no reservations, and you'll see that he'll not avail himself of such privileges now. I do know him thoroughly."

"Then what, or whence, is your fear?"

Linton made no other answer than a gesture of his hand, implying some vague and indistinct dread. "But go," said he, "and go quickly. You ought never to have left the Court. Had you remained, perhaps this

might have been prevented. If all goes right, you'll be here by daybreak at furthest, and Keane along with you. Take care of that, Jones; don't lose sight of him. If—if—we are unfortunate——and do you think such possible?"

"Everything is possible with a Jury."

"True," said he, thoughtfully; "it is an issue we should never have left it to. But away; hasten back. Great Heaven! only to think how much hangs upon the next half hour!"

"To Cashel, you mean?" said Jones, as he prepared himself for the road.

"No; I mean to *me*. I *do* know him thoroughly; and well I know the earth would be too narrow to live upon, were that man once more free and at liberty."

In his eagerness for Jones's departure, he almost pushed him from the room; and then, when he had closed and locked the door again, he sat down beside the low flickering fire, and as the fitful light played upon his features, all the appliances of disguise he wore could not hide the terrible ravages that long corroding anxiety had made in him. Far more did he resemble the arraigned criminal than he who now stood in the dock, and with a cheek blanched only by imprisonment, waited calm, collected, and erect—"Equal to either fortune."

Linton had often felt all the terrible suspense which makes the Paradise or the Hell of the gambler: he had known what it was to have his whole fortune on the issue, at a moment when the rushing mob of horsemen and foot concealed the winning horse from view, and mingled in their mad cheers the names of those whose victory had been his ruin and disgrace. He had watched the rolling die, on whose surface, as it turned, all he owned in the world was staked; he had sat gazing on the unturned card, on which his destiny was already written;—and yet all these moments of agonising suspense were as nothing compared to that he now suffered, as he sat with bent-down head trying to catch the sounds which from time to time the wind bore along from the town.

As if to feed his mind with hope, he would recapitulate to himself all the weighty and damnatory details which environed Cashel, and which, by their singular consistency and coherence, seemed irrefutable. He would even reckon them upon his fingers, as "so many chances against him." He would try to imagine himself one of the Jury, listening to the evidence and the charge; and asked himself "were it possible to reject such proofs?" He pictured to his mind Cashel addressing the Court with all that rash and impetuous eloquence so characteristic of him, and which, to more trained and sober tempers, would indicate a nature little subject to the cold dis-

cipline of restraint; and from all these speculative dreams he would start suddenly up, to lean out of the window and listen. Other thoughts, too, would cross his mind, scarcely less distracting. What would become of himself should Cashel escape? Whither should he retire? If, at one moment, he half resolved to "stand his ground" in the world, and trust to his consummate skill in secret calumny to ruin him, another reflection showed that Cashel would not play out the game on these conditions. A duel, in which one at least must fall, would be inevitable; and although this was an ordeal he had braved oftener than most men, he had no courage to dare it now. Through all this tangled web of harassing hope and fear, regrets deep and poignant entered, that he had not worked his ruin by slower and safer steps. "I might have been both Judge and Jury—ay, and Executioner, too," muttered he, "had I been patient." And here he gave a low, sardonic laugh. "When the hour of confiscation came, I might have played the Crown's part also." But so is it: there is no halting in the downward course of wickedness; the very pleadings of self-interest cannot save men from the commission of *Crimes*, by which they are to hide *Follies*.

The slow hours of the night dragged heavily on; the fire had gone out, and the candle too—unnoticed, and Linton sat in the dark, brooding over his gloomy thoughts. At one moment he would start up, and wonder if the whole were not a terrible dream—the nightmare of his own imagination; and it was only after an effort he remembered where he was, and with what object. He could not see his watch to tell the hour, but he knew it must be late, since the fire had long since died out, and the room was cold and chill. The agony of expectation became at last too great to endure; he felt his way to the door and passed out, and groping down the narrow stair, reached the outer door, and the road.

All was dark and lonely; not a sound of horseman or foot-traveller broke the dreary stillness of the hour, as Linton, urged on by an impulse he could not restrain, took his way towards the town. The distance was scarcely above a mile, but his progress was slow, for the road was wet and slippery, and the darkness very great. At last he reached the long straggling suburb, with its interminable streets of wretched hovels; but even here none were yet astir, and not a light was seen to glimmer. To this succeeded the narrow streets of the town itself—where, at long intervals, a dusky yellow haze glimmered by way of lamplight. Stopping beneath one of these, Linton examined his watch, and found that it was near five o'clock. The lateness of the hour, and the unbroken stillness on every side, half induced him to believe that "all was over," and Cashel's fate sealed for good or evil; but then Jones would have hastened back to bring the tidings! There could not be a doubt on this head. Urged onward to greater speed by emotions

which now were scarcely supportable, he traversed street after street in frantic haste; when suddenly, on turning a corner, he came in front of a large building, from whose windows, dimmed by steam, a great blaze of light issued, and fell in long columns upon the "Square" in front. A dense, dark mass of human figures crowded the wide doorway, but they were silent and motionless all. Within the Court, too, the stillness was unbroken; for as Linton listened he could now hear a cough, which resounded through the building.

"The Jury are in deliberation," thought he, and sat down upon the step of a door, his eyes riveted upon the Court-house, and his heart beating so that he could count its strokes. Not far from him, as he sat there, scarcely a hundred paces off, within the building, there sat another man, waiting with a high throbbing heart for that word to be uttered, which should either open the door of his prison, or close that of the grave upon him for ever. The moments of expectancy were terrible to both! they were life-long agonies distilled to seconds; and he who could live through their pains must come forth from the trial a changed man for ever after.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

### "NOT GUILTY."

> Free to go forth once more, but oh
> How changed! HAROLD.

A SLIGHT movement in the crowd near the door—a kind of waving motion like the quiet surging of the sea—seemed to indicate some commotion within the Court; and although Linton saw this, and judged it rightly as the evidence of something eventful about to happen, he sat still to await the result with the dogged firmness with which he would have awaited death itself.

As we are less interested spectators of the scene, let us press our way through the tired and exhausted crowd that fill the body of the building. And now we stand beneath the gallery, and immediately behind a group of about half a dozen, whose dress and demeanour at once proclaim them of the world of fashion. These are Lord Charles Frobisher and his friends, who, with memorandum-books and timepieces before them, sit in eager anxiety, for they have wagers on everything: on the verdict—how the Judge will charge—if the prisoner will confess—if he will attempt a

defence; and even the length of time the Jury will sit in deliberation, is the subject of a bet!

This anxiety was now at its climax, for, directly in front of them, a small door had just opened, and a crowd of men entered, and took their seats in the gallery.

Their grave countenances, marked by watching and eager discussion, at once proclaimed that they were the Jury.

There was a low murmur heard throughout the Court as they took their seats; and instinctively many an eye was turned towards the dock, to watch how *he* bore himself in that trying moment. With a steady gaze fixed upon the spot from which his doom was to be spoken, he stood erect, with arms folded and his head high. He was deathly pale; but not a trace of anything like fear in the calm lineaments of his manly features.

"The Jury seem very grave," whispered Upton to Frobisher.

"I wish that stupid old Judge would bestir himself," replied Lord Charles, looking at his watch; "it wants four minutes to five: he'll scarcely be in Court before it strikes, and I shall lose a pony through it."

"Here he comes!—here he comes!" said another; and the Chief Baron entered the Court, his face betraying that he had been aroused from sleep.

"Are you agreed, Gentlemen of the Jury?" asked the Judge, in a low voice.

"Not perfectly, my Lord," said the Foreman. "We want your Lordship to decide a point for us; which is—If we should be of opinion that any grave provocation led to the death of Kennyfeck, whether our verdict could be modified, and our finding be, in consequence, for manslaughter, and not murder?"

"The indictment," said the Judge, "does not give you that option. It is framed without any count for the minor offence. I ought, perhaps, also to observe, that nothing has transpired in the evidence given here, this day, to warrant the impression you seem inclined to entertain. Your verdict must be one of Guilty or Not Guilty."

"We are of opinion, my Lord," said a Juryman, "that great latitude in the expression of temper should be conceded to a young man reared and educated as the prisoner has been."

"These sentiments, honourable to you as they are, cannot be indulged at the expense of justice, however they may find a fitting place in a recommendation to mercy; and even this must be accompanied by something more than sympathies."

"Well said, old boy!" muttered Frobisher to himself. "My odds are looking up again."

"In that case, my Lord, we must retire again," said the Foreman; and the Jury once more quitted the Court, whose occupants at once resumed all

the lounging attitudes from which the late scene had aroused them. Exhaustion, indeed, had overcome all save the prisoner himself, who paced the narrow limits of the dock with slow and noiseless steps, raising his head at intervals, to watch the gallery where the Jury were to appear.

In less than half an hour the creaking of a door awoke the drowsy Court, and the Jury were seen re-entering the box. They continued to talk among each other as they took their seats, and seemed like men still under the influence of warm discussion.

"Not agreed!" muttered Frobisher, looking at his book. "I stand to win, even on that."

To the formal question of the Court, the Foreman for an instant made no reply, for he was still in eager conversation with another Juror.

"How say you, Gentlemen of the Jury? Are you agreed?"

"We are, my Lord," said the Foreman; "that is to say, some of the Jury have conceded to the rest for the sake of a verdict."

"This does not seem to me like agreement," interposed the Judge. "If you be not of the same mind, it will be your duty to retire once more, and strive by the use of argument and reason to bring the minority to your opinion; or in failure of such result, to avow that you are not like-minded."

"We have done all that is possible in that respect, my Lord; and we beg you will receive our verdict."

"If it be your verdict, Gentlemen," said the Judge, "I desire nothing more."

"We say, Not Guilty, my Lord," said the Foreman.

There was a solemn pause followed the words, and then a low murmur arose, which gradually swelled till it burst forth into a very clamour, that only the grave rebuke of the Bench reduced to the wonted decorum of a Court of Justice.

"I am never disposed, Gentlemen of the Jury, to infringe upon the sacred prerogative which environs your office. You are responsible to God and your own consciences for the words you have uttered here, this day; but my duty requires that I should be satisfied that you have come to your conclusion by a due understanding of the facts laid before you in evidence, by just and natural inferences from those facts, and by weighing well and dispassionately all that you have heard, here, to the utter exclusion of anything you may have listened to outside of this Court. Is your verdict in accordance with these conditions?"

"So far, my Lord, as the mysterious circumstances of this crime admit, I believe it is. We say 'Not Guilty,' from a firm conviction on our minds that we are saying the truth."

"Enough," said the Judge. "Clerk, record the Verdict." Then turning to the dock, towards which every eye was now bent, he continued: "Roland Cashel, a jury of your countrymen, solemnly sworn to try you on the charge of murder, have this day pronounced you 'Not Guilty.' You go, therefore, free from this dock, to resume that station you occupied in society, without stain upon your character or blemish upon your fame. The sworn verdict we have recorded obliterates the accusation. But, for the sake of justice, for the interests of the glorious prerogative we possess in Trial by Jury, for the sacred cause of Truth itself, I implore you, before quitting this Court, to unravel the thread of this dark mystery, so far as in you lies—to fill up those blanks in the narrative you have already given us—to confirm, to the extent in your power, the justice of that sentence by which you are restored once more to the society of your friends and family. This, I say, is now your duty; and the example you will give, in performing it, will reflect credit upon yourself, and do service to the cause of truth, when you, and I, and those around us, shall be no more."

It was with stronger show of emotion than Cashel had yet displayed that he leaned over the dock, and said:

"My Lord, when life, and something more than life, were in peril, I deemed it right to reserve certain details from the notoriety of this Court. I did so, not to involve any other in the suspicion of this guilt, whose author I know not. I did not do so from any caprice, still less from that misanthropic affectation the Counsel was ungenerous enough to ascribe to me. I believe that I had good and sufficient reasons for the course I adopted. I still think I have such. As to the rest, the discovery of this guilt is now become the duty of my life—I owe it to those whose words have set me free, and I pledge myself to the duty."

The Bench now conferred with the Crown Lawyers as to the proceedings necessary for the discharge of the prisoner; and already the crowds, wearied and exhausted, began to withdraw. The interest of the scene was over; and in the various expressions of those that passed might be read the feelings with which they regarded the result. Many reprobated the verdict as against law and all the facts; some attributed the "finding" to the force of caprice; others even hinted the baser motive, that they didn't like "to hang a man who spent his income at home;" and others, again, surmised that bribery might have had "something to do with it." Few believed in Cashel's innocence of the crime; and even they said nothing, for their convictions were more those of impulse than reason.

"Who could have thought it!" muttered Upton, as, with a knot of others, he stood waiting for the crowd to pass out.

Frobisher shrugged his shoulders, and went on totting a line of figures in his memorandum-book.

"Better off than I thought!" said he to himself; "seven to five taken that he would not plead—eight to three, that he would not call Linton. Long odds upon time won: lost by verdict four hundred and fifty. Well, it might have been worse; and I've got a lesson—never to trust a Jury."

"I say, Charley," whispered Upton, "what are you going to do?"

"How do you mean?"

"Will you go up and speak to him?" said he, with a motion of his head towards the dock.

Frobisher's sallow cheek grew scarlet. Lost and dead to every sense of honourable feeling for many a day, the well had not altogether dried up, and it was with a look of cutting insolence he said:

"No, Sir; if I did not stand by him before, I'll not be the hound to crawl to his feet now."

"By Jove! I don't see the thing in that light. He's all right now, and there's no reason why we shouldn't know him as we used to do."

"Are you so certain that he will know *you?*" was Frobisher's sharp reply as he turned away.

The vast moving throng pressed forward, and now all were speedily commingled—spectators, lawyers, jurors, witnesses. The spectacle was over, and the empty Court stood silent and noiseless, where a few moments back human hopes and passions had surged like the waves of a sea.

The great space in front of the Court-house, filled for a few moments by the departing crowd, grew speedily silent and empty—for day had not yet broken, and all were hastening homeward to seek repose. One figure alone was seen to stand in that spot, and then move slowly, and to all seeming irresolutely, onward. It was Cashel himself, who, undecided whither to turn, walked listlessly and carelessly on.

As he turned the corner of a street, a jaunting-car, around which some travellers stood, stopped the way, and he heard the words of the driver:

"There's another place to spare."

"Where for?" asked Cashel.

"Limerick, Sir," said the man.

"Drive on, b——t you," cried a deep voice from the other side of the vehicle; and the fellow's whip descended with a heavy slash, and the beast struck out into a gallop, and speedily was out of sight.

"Didn't you see who it was?" muttered the speaker to the man beside him.

"No."

"It was Cashel himself—I knew him at once; and I tell you, Jones, he would have known *me*, too, for all this disguise, when a gleam of day came to shine."

As for Cashel, he stood gazing after the departing vehicle, with a strange chaos of thought working within. "Am I then infamous?" said he at last, "that these men will not travel in my company. Is it to this the mere accusation of crime has brought me!" And, slight as the incident was, it told upon him as some acrid substance would irritate and corrode an open wound—festering the tender surface.

"Better thus dreaded than the 'Dupe' I have been!" said he, boldly, and entered the inn, where now the preparations for the coming day had begun. He ordered his breakfast, and post-horses for Killaloe, resolved to see Tubbermore once again, ere he left it for ever.

It was a bright morning in the early spring as Cashel drove through the wide-spreading park of Tubbermore. Dewdrops spangled the grass, amid which crocus and daffodil flowers were scattered. The trees were topped with fresh buds; the birds were chirping and twittering on the branches; the noiseless river, too, flowed past, its circling eddies looking like blossoms on the stream. All was joyous and redolent of promise, save him whose humbled spirit beheld in everything around him the signs of self-reproach.

"These," thought he, "were the rich gifts of fortune that I have squandered! This was the paradise I have laid waste! Here, where I might have lived happy, honoured, and respected, I see myself wretched and shunned! The defeats we meet with in hardy and hazardous enterprise are softened down by having dared danger fearlessly—by having combated manfully with the enemy. But what solace is there for him whose reverses spring from childlike weakness and imbecility—whose life becomes the plaything of parasites and flatterers! Could I ever have thought I would become this? What should I once have said of him who would have prophesied me such as I now am?"

These gloomy reveries grew deeper and darker as he wandered from place to place, and marked the stealthy glances and timid reverences of the peasants as they passed him. "It is only the Jury have called me 'Not Guilty,'" said he to himself; "the world has pronounced another verdict. I have come from that dock as one might have risen from an unhonoured grave, to be looked on with fear and sorrow. Be it so; mine must be a lonely existence."

Every room he entered recalled some scene of his past life. Here was the spacious hall, where, in all the excesses of the banquet, laughter had rung and wit had sparkled, loud toasts were proffered, and high-spirited mirth had once held sway. Here was the drawing-room, where grace and female

loveliness were blended, mingling their odours like flowers in a "bouquet." Here, the little chamber he had often sought to visit Lady Kilgoff, and passed those hours of "sweet converse" wherein his whole nature became changed, and his rude spirit softened by the tender influences of a woman's mind. Here was his own favourite room—the spot from which, in many an hour snatched from the cares of host, he had watched the wide-flowing river, and thought of the current of his own life, mingling with his reveries many a high hope and many a glorious promise. And now the whole scene was changed. The mirth, the laughter, the guests, the hopes, were fled, and he stood alone in those silent halls, that never again were to echo with the glad voice of pleasure.

The chief object of his return to Tubbermore was to regain possession of that document which he had concealed in the cleft of a beech-tree, before scaling the approach to the window. He found the spot without difficulty, and soon possessed himself of the paper, the contents of which, however, from being conveyed in a character he was not familiar with, he could not master.

He next proceeded to the gate-lodge, desirous to see Keane, and make some arrangement for his future support before he should leave Tubbermore. The man, however, was absent; his wife, whose manner betrayed considerable emotion, said that her husband had returned in company with another, who remained without, while he hastily packed a few articles of clothing in a bundle, and then left the house, whither to she knew not.

Roland's last visit was to Tiernay's house; but he, too, was from home. He had accompanied Corrigan to Dublin, intending to take leave of him there; but a few hurried lines told that he had resolved to proceed further with his friends, and darkly hinting that his return to the village was more than doubtful.

Wherever Cashel turned, desertion and desolation met him; and the cutting question that ever recurred to his mind was, "Is this *my* doing? Are these the consequences of *my* folly?" The looks of the villagers seemed to tally with the accusation, as in cold respect they touched their hats as he passed, but never spoke: "not one said God bless him."

He twice set out for the cottage, and twice turned back—his over-full heart almost choked with emotion. The very path that led thither reminded him too fully of the past, and he turned from it into the wood, to wander about for hours long, lost in thought.

He sought and found relief in planning out something for his future life. The discovery of the murderer—the clearing up of the terrible mystery that involved that crime—had become a duty, and he resolved to apply himself to it steadily and determinedly. His unacquitted debt of vengeance on

Linton, too, was not forgotten. These accomplished, he resolved again to betake himself to the "new world beyond seas." Wealth had become distasteful to him: it was associated with all that lowered and humiliated him. He felt that with poverty his manly reliance, his courageous daring to confront danger, would return—that once more upon the wild prairie, or the blue waters of the Pacific, he would grow young of heart and high in spirit, forgetting the puerile follies into which a life of affluence had led him. "Would that I could believe it all a dream!" thought he. "Would that this whole year were but a vision, and that I could go back to what I once was, even as 'the Buccaneer' they called me!"

His last hours in Tubbermore were spent in arrangements that showed he never intended to return there. His household was all discharged—his equipages and horses despatched to the capital to be sold—his books, his plate, and all that was valuable in furniture, were ordered to be packed up and transmitted to Dublin. He felt a kind of malicious pleasure in erasing and effacing, as it were, every trace of the last few months.

"I will leave it," muttered he, "to become the wreck I found it—would that I could be what I was ere I knew it!"

The following day he left Tubbermore for ever, and set out for Dublin.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### ON THE TRACK.

> And, with a sleuth-hound's scent,
> Smells blood afar!

It was nightfall when Roland Cashel entered Dublin. The stir and movement of the day were over, and that brief interval which separates the life of business from that of pleasure had succeeded. Few were stirring in the streets, and they were hastening to the dinner-parties, whose hour had now arrived. It was little more than a year since Cashel had entered that same capital, and what a change had come over him within that period! Then, he was buoyant in all the enjoyment of youth, health, and affluence; now, although still young, sorrow and care had worn him into premature age. His native frankness had become distrust; his generous reliance on the world's good faith had changed into a cold and cautious reserve which made him detestable to himself.

Although he passed several of his former acquaintance without being recognised, he could not persuade himself but that their avoidance of him was intentional, and he thought he saw a purpose-like insolence in the pressing entreaties with which the newsvendors persecuted him to buy "The Full and True Report of the Trial of Roland Cashel for Murder."

And thus it was that he whose fastidious modesty had shrunk from everything like the notoriety of fashion, now saw himself exposed to that more terrible ordeal, the notoriety of crime. The consciousness of innocence could not harden him against the poignant suffering the late exposure had inflicted. His whole life laid bare! Not even to gratify the morbid curiosity of gossips; not to amuse the languid listlessness of a world devoured by its own *ennui;* but far worse! To furnish motives for an imputed crime! To give the clue to a murder! In the bitterness of his torn heart, he asked himself—"Have I deserved all this?—Is this the just requital for my conduct towards others? Have the hospitality I have extended, the generous assistance I have proffered—have the thousand extravagances I have committed to gratify others—no other fruits than these?" Alas! the answer of his enlightened intelligence could no longer blind him by its flatteries. He recognised at last, that to his abuse of fortune were owing all his reverses; that the capricious extravagance of the rich man—his misplaced generosity, his pompous display—can create enemies far more dangerous than all the straits and appliances of rebellious poverty; that the tie of an obligation which can ennoble a generous nature, may, in a bad heart, develop the very darkest elements of iniquity; and that he who refuses to be bound by gratitude is enslaved by hate!

He stopped for an instant before Kennyfeck's house; the closed shutters and close-drawn blinds bespoke it still the abode of mourning. He passed the residence of the Kilgoffs, and there, the grass-grown steps and rusted knocker spoke of absence. They had left the country. He next came to his own mansion—that spacious building which, at the same hour, was wont to be brilliant with wax-lights and besieged by fast-arriving guests, where the throng of carriages pressed forward in eager haste, and where, as each step descended, some form or figure moved by, great in fame or more illustrious still by beauty. Now, all was dark, gloomy, and deserted. A single gleam of light issued from the kitchen, which was speedily removed as Roland knocked at the door.

The female servant who opened the door nearly dropped the candle as she recognised the features of her master, who, without speaking, passed on, and, without even removing his hat, entered the library. Profuse in apologies for the disorder of the furniture, and excuses for the absence of the other servants, she followed him into the room, and stood, half in

shame and half in terror, gazing at the wan and worn countenance of him she remembered the very ideal of health and youth.

"If we only knew your honour was coming home to-night——"

"I did not know it myself, good woman, at this hour yesterday. Let me have something to eat—well, a crust of bread and a glass of wine—there's surely so much in the house?"

"I can give your honour some bread, but all the wine is packed up and gone."

"Gone! whither, and by whose order?" said Roland, calmly.

"Mr. Phillis, Sir, sent it off about ten days ago, with the plate, and I hear both are off to America!"

"The bread alone, then, with a glass of water, will do," said he, without any emotion or the least evidence of surprise in his manner.

"The fare smacks of the prison still," said Roland, as he sat at his humble meal; "and truly the house itself is almost as gloomy."

The aspect of everything was sad and depressing. Neglect and disorder pervaded wherever he turned his steps. In some of the rooms the remains of past orgies still littered the tables. Smashed vases of rare porcelain, broken mirrors, torn pictures—all the work, in fact, which ruffian intemperance in its most savage mood accomplishes—told who were they who replaced his fashionable society; while, as if to show the unfeeling spirit of the revellers, several of the pasquinades against himself, the libellous calumnies of the low press, the disgusting caricatures of infamous prints, were scattered about amid the wrecks of the debauch.

Roland saw these things with sorrow, but without anger. "I must have fallen low indeed," muttered he, "when it is by such men I am judged."

In the room which once had been his study a great pile of unsettled bills covered the table, the greater number of which he remembered to have given the money for; there were no letters, however, nor even one card of an acquaintance, so that, save to his creditors, his very existence seemed to be forgotten.

Wearied of his sad pilgrimage from room to room, he sat down at last in a small boudoir, which it had been his caprice once to adorn with the portraits of "his friends!" sketched by a fashionable artist. There they were, all smiling blandly, as he left them. What a commentary on their desertion of him were the looks so full of benevolence and affection! There was Frobisher, lounging in all the ease of fashionable indifference, but still with a smile upon his languid features. There was Upton, the very picture of straightforward good feeling and frankness. There was Jennings, all beaming with generosity; and Linton, too, occupying the chief place, seemed to stare with the very expression of resolute attachment that so often had im-

posed on Cashel, and made him think him a most devoted, but perhaps an indiscreet, friend. Roland's own portrait had been turned to the wall, while on the reverse was written, in large characters, the words, "To be hung, or hanged, elsewhere." The brutal jest brought the colour for an instant to his cheek, but the next moment he was calm and tranquil as before.

Lost in musings, the time stole by; and it was late in the night ere he betook himself to rest. His sleep was the heavy slumber of an overworked mind; but he awoke refreshed and with a calm courage to breast the tide of fortune, however it might run.

Life seemed to present to him two objects of paramount interest. One of these was the discovery of Kennyfeck's murderer; the second was the payment of his debt of vengeance to Linton. Some secret instinct induced him to couple the two together; and although neither reason nor reflection afforded a clue to link them, they came ever in company before his mind, and rose like one fact before him.

Mr. Hammond, the eminent lawyer, to whom he had written a few lines, came punctually at ten o'clock to confer with him. Roland had determined to reveal no more of his secret to the ears of counsel than he had done before the Court, when an accidental circumstance totally changed the course of his proceeding.

"I have sent for you, Mr. Hammond," said Cashel, as soon as they were seated, "to enlist your skilful services in tracing out the real authors of a crime of which I narrowly escaped the penalty. I will first, however, entreat your attention to another matter, for this may be the last opportunity ever afforded me of personally consulting you."

"You purpose to live abroad, Sir?" asked Hammond.

"I shall return to Mexico," said Roland, briefly; and then resumed: "Here is a document, Sir, of whose tenor and meaning I am ignorant, but of whose importance I cannot entertain a doubt: will you peruse it?"

Hammond opened the parchment; but scarcely had his eyes glanced over it, when he laid it down before him, and said:

"I have seen this before, Mr. Cashel. You are aware that I already gave you my opinion as to its value?"

"I am not aware of that," said Roland, calmly. "Pray, in whose possession did you see it, and what does it mean?"

Hammond seemed confused for a few seconds; and then, as if overcoming a scruple, said:

"We must both be explicit here, Sir. This document was shown to me, by Mr. Linton, at Limerick, he alleging that it was at your desire and by your request. As to its import, it simply means that you hold your present

estates without a title; that document being a full pardon, revoking all penalty of confiscation against the heirs of Miles Corrigan, and reinstating them and theirs in their ancient possessions. Now, Sir, may I ask, do you hear this for the first time?"

Roland nodded in acquiescence; his heart was too full for utterance, and the sudden revulsion of his feeling had brought a sickly sensation over him.

"Mr. Linton," resumed Hammond, "in showing me this deed, spoke of a probable alliance between you and the granddaughter of Mr. Corrigan; and I freely concurred in the propriety of a union which might at once settle the difficulty of a very painful litigation. He promised me more full information on the subject, and engaged me to make searches for a registry, if such existed, of the pardon; but I heard nothing more from him, and the matter escaped my memory till this moment."

"So that all this while I have been dissipating that which was not mine," said Roland, with a bitterness of voice and manner that bespoke what he suffered.

"You have done what some thousands have done, are doing, and will do hereafter—enjoyed possession of that which the law gave you, and which a deeper research into the same law may take away."

"And Linton knew this?"

"He certainly knew my opinion of this document; but am I to suppose that you were ignorant of it up to this moment?"

"You shall hear all," said Cashel, passing his hand across his brow, which now ached with the torture of intense emotion. "To save myself from all the ignominy of a felon's death, I did not reveal this before. It was with me as a point of honour, that I would reserve this man for a personal vengeance; but now, a glimmering light is breaking on my brain, that darker deeds than all he worked against me lie at his door, and that in following up my revenge I may be but robbing the scaffold of its due. Listen to me, attentively." So saying, Cashel narrated every event of the memorable day of Kennyfeck's death, detailing his meeting with Enrique in the glen, and his last interview with Linton in his dressing-room.

Hammond heard all with deepest interest, only interrupting at times to ask such questions as might throw light upon the story. The whole body of the circumstantial evidence against Roland not only became easily explicable, but the shrewd perception of the lawyer also saw the consummate skill with which the details had been worked into regular order, and what consistency had been imparted to them. The great difficulty of the case lay in the fact, that, supposing Kennyfeck's death had been planned by others, with the intention of imputing the crime to Cashel, yet all the circumstances, or nearly all, which seemed to imply his guilt, were matters of perfect acci-

dent for which they never could have provided, nor even ever foreseen: such as his entrance by the window—his torn dress—the wound of his hand—and the blood upon his clothes.

"I see but one clue to this mystery," said Hammond, thoughtfully; "but the more I reflect upon it, the more likely does it seem. Kennyfeck's fate was intended for you—he fell by a mistake."

Roland started with astonishment, but listened with deep attention, as Hammond recapitulated everything which accorded with this assumption.

"But why was one of my own pistols taken for the deed?"

"Perhaps to suggest the notion of suicide."

"How could my death have been turned to profit? Was I not better as the living dupe than as the dead enemy?"

"Do you not see how your death legalised the deed with a forged signature? Who was to dispute its authenticity? Besides, how know we what ambitions Linton may not have cherished when holding in his hands the only title to the estate. We may go too fast with these suspicions, but let us not reject them as inconsistent. Who is this same witness, Keane? What motives had he for the gratitude he evinced on the trial?"

"None whatever: on the contrary, I never showed him any favour; it was even my intention to dismiss him from the gate-lodge!"

"And he was aware of this?"

"Perfectly. He had besought several people to intercede for him, Linton among the rest."

"So that he was known to Linton? And what has become of him since the trial?"

"That is the strangest of all. My wish was to have done something for the poor fellow. I could not readily forget the feeling he showed, at a moment, too, when none seemed to remember me; so that when I reached Tubbermore I at once repaired to the lodge, but he was gone."

"And in what direction?"

"His wife could not tell. The poor creature was distracted at being deserted, and seemed to think—from what cause I know not—that he would not return. He had come back after the trial in company with another, who remained on the road-side while Keane hastily packed up some clothes, after which they departed together."

"This must be thought of," said Hammond, gravely, while he wrote some lines in his note-book.

"It is somewhat strange, indeed," said Cashel, "that the very men to whom my gratitude is most due are those who seem to avoid me. Thus—Jones, who gave me his aid upon the trial——"

"Do not speak of him, Sir," said Hammond, in a voice of agitation; "he

is one who has sullied an order that has hitherto been almost without a stain. There is but too much reason to think that he was bribed to destroy you. His whole line of cross-examination on the trial was artfully devised to develop whatever might injure you; but the treachery turned upon the men who planned it. The Attorney-General saw it, and the Court also. It was this saved you."

Cashel sat powerless and speechless at this disclosure. It seemed to fill up in his mind the cup of iniquity, and he never moved nor uttered a word as he listened.

"Jones you will never see again. The bar of some other land across the sea may receive him, but there is not one here would stoop to be his colleague. But now for others more important. I will this day obtain the Judge's notes of the trial, and give the whole case the deepest consideration. Inquiry shall be set on foot as to Keane, with whom he has gone, and in what direction. Linton, too, must be watched; the report is that he lies dangerously ill at his country house, but that story may be invented to gain time."

Cashel could scarcely avoid a smile at the rapidity with which the lawyer detailed his plan of operation, and threw out, as he went, the signs of distrust so characteristic of his craft. As for himself, he was enjoined to remain in the very strictest privacy—to see no one, nor even to leave the house, except after nightfall.

"Rely upon it," said Hammond, "your every movement is watched; and our object will be to ascertain by whom. This will be our first clue; and when we obtain one, others will soon follow."

It was no privation for Cashel to follow a course so much in accordance with his wishes. Solitude—even that which consigned him to the saddest reveries—was far more pleasurable than any intercourse; so that he never ventured beyond the walls of his house for weeks, nor exchanged a word, except with Hammond, who regularly visited him each day, to report the progress of his investigation.

The mystery did not seem to clear away, even by the skilful contrivances of the lawyer. Of Keane not a trace could be discovered; nor could any clue be obtained as to his companion. All that Hammond knew was, that although a doctor's carriage daily drove to Linton's house, Linton himself had long since left the country—it was believed for the Continent.

Disappointed by continual failures, and wearied by a life whose only excitement lay in anxieties and cares, Cashel grew each day sadder and more depressed. The desire for vengeance, too, that first had filled his mind, grew weaker as time rolled on. The wish to reinstate himself fully in the world's esteem diminished, as he lived apart from all its intercourse, and he sank

into a low and gloomy despondency, which soon showed its ravages upon his face and figure.

One object alone remained for him—this was to seek out Corrigan and place in his hand the document of his ancestor's pardon; this done, Roland resolved to betake himself to Mexico, and again, among the haunts of his youth, to try and forget that life of civilisation which had cost him so dearly.

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## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### LA NINETTA.

How sweete and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beautie of thy budding name.

Some years passed over, and the name of Roland Cashel ceased to be uttered, or his memory even evoked, in that capital where once his wealth, his eccentricies, and his notoriety, had been the theme of every tongue. A large neglected-looking house, with closed shutters and grass-grown steps, would attract the attention of some passing stranger to ask whom it belonged to, but the name of Mr. Cashel was almost all that many knew of him, and a vague impression that he was travelling in some remote and far-away land.

Tubbermore, too, fell back into its former condition of ruin and decay No one seemed to know into whose hands the estate had fallen, but the talismanic word "Chancery" appeared to satisfy every inquiry, and account for a desolation that brooded over the property and all who dwelt on it. The very "Cottage" had yielded to the course of time, and little remained of it save a few damp discoloured walls and blackened chimneys; while here and there a rare shrub, or a tree of foreign growth, rose among the rank weeds and thistles, to speak of the culture which once had been the pride of this lovely spot.

Had there been a "curse upon the place," it could not have been more dreary and sad-looking!

Of the gate-lodge—where Keane lived—a few straggling ruins alone remained, in a corner of which a miserable family was herded together, their wan looks and tattered clothing showing that they were dependent for existence on the charity of the very poor. These were Keane's wife and

children, to whom he never again returned. There was a blight over everything. The tenantry themselves, no longer subject to the visits of the agent, the stimulus to all industry withdrawn, would scarcely labour for their own support, but passed their lives in brawls and quarrels, which more than once had led to a felon's sentence. The land lay untilled; the cattle, untended, strayed at will through the unfenced fields. The villages on the property were crammed by a host of runaway wretches whose crimes had driven them from their homes, till at length the district became the plague-spot of the country, where, even at noonday, few strangers were bold enough to enter, and the word "Tubbermore" had a terrible significance in the neighbourhood round about.

Let us now turn for the last time to him whose fortune had so powerfully influenced his property, and whose dark destiny seemed to throw its shadow over all that once was his. For years Roland Cashel had been a wanderer. He travelled every country of the Old World and the New; his appearance and familiarity with the language enabling him to assume the nationality of a Spaniard, and thus screen him from that painful notoriety to which his story was certain to expose him. Journeying alone, and in the least expensive manner—for he no longer considered himself entitled to any of the property he once enjoyed—he made few acquaintances and contracted no friendships. One object alone gave a zest to existence—to discover Mr. Corrigan, and place within his hands the title-deeds of Tubbermore. With this intention he had searched through more than half of Europe, visiting the least frequented towns, and pursuing inquiries in every possible direction; at one moment cheered by some glimmering prospect of success, at another dashed by disappointment and failure. If a thought of Linton did occasionally cross him, he struggled manfully to overcome the temptings of a passion which should thwart the dearest object of his life, and make vengeance predominate over truth and honesty. As time rolled on the spirit of his hatred became gradually weaker; and if he did not forgive all the ills his treachery had worked, his memory of them was less frequent and less painful.

His was a cheerless, for it was a friendless, existence. Avoiding his own countrymen from the repugnance he felt to sustain his disguise by falsehood, he wandered from land to land and city to city like some penitent in the accomplishment of a vow. The unbroken monotony of this life, the continued pressure of disappointment, at last began to tell upon him, and in his moody abstractions—his fits of absence and melancholy—might be seen the change which had come over him. He might have been a long time ignorant of an alteration which not only impressed his mind, but even his "outward man," when his attention was drawn to the fact by overhearing

the observations of some young Englishmen upon his appearance, as he sat one evening in a *café* at Naples. Conversing in all that careless freedom of our young countrymen, which never supposes that their language can be understood by others, they criticised his dress, his sombre look, and his manner; and, after an animated discussion as to whether he were a refugee political offender, a courier, or a spy, they wound up by a wager that he was at least forty years of age. One of the party dissenting—on the ground that, although he looked it, it was rather from something on the fellow's mind than years.

"How shall we find out?" cried the proposer of the bet. "I, for one, shouldn't like to ask him his age."

"If I knew Spanish enough, I'd do it at once," said another.

"It might cost you dearly, Harry, for all that; he looks marvellously like a fellow that wouldn't brook trifling."

"He wouldn't call it trifling to lose me ten 'carlines,' and I'm sure I should win my wager; so here goes at him with French." Rising at the same moment, the young man crossed the room and stood before the table where Cashel sat, with folded arms and bent-down head, listening in utter indifference to all that passed. "Monsieur!" said the youth, bowing. Cashel looked up, and his dark, heavily-browed eyes seemed to abash the other, who stood, blushing, and uncertain what to do.

With faltering accents and downcast look he began to mutter excuses for his intrusion; when Cashel, in a mild and gentle voice, interrupted him, saying in English, "I am your countryman, young gentleman, and my age not six-and-twenty."

The quiet courtesy of his manner as he spoke, as well as the surprise at his being English, seemed to increase the youth's shame for the liberty he had taken, and he was profuse in his apologies; but Cashel soon allayed this anxiety by adroitly turning to another part of the subject, and saying, "If I look much older than I am, it is that I have travelled and lived a good deal in southern climates, not to speak of other causes, which give premature age."

A slight, a very slight touch of melancholy in the latter words gave them a deep interest to the youth; who, with a boyish frankness—far more fascinating than more finished courtesy—asked Roland if he would join their party. Had such a request been made half an hour before, or had it come in more formal fashion, Cashel would inevitably have declined it; but what between the generous candour of the youth's address, and a desire to show that he did not resent his intrusion, Cashel acceded good-naturedly, and took his seat amongst them.

As Roland listened to the joyous freshness of their boyish talk—the high-

nearted hope—the sanguine trustfulness with which they regarded life—he remembered what but a few years back he had himself been. He saw in them the self-same elements which had led him on to every calamity that he suffered—the passionate pursuit of pleasure—the inexhaustible craving for excitement that makes life the feverish paroxysm of a malady.

They sat to a late hour together; and when they separated, the chance acquaintance had ripened into intimacy. Night after night they met in the same place; and while they were charmed with the gentle seriousness of one in whom they could recognise the most manly daring, he, on his side, was fascinated by the confiding warmth and the generous frankness of their youth.

One evening, as they assembled as usual, Roland remarked a something like unusual excitement amongst them; and learned, that from a letter they had received that morning, they were about to leave Naples the next day. There seemed some mystery in the reason, and a kind of reserve in ever alluding to it, which made Cashel half suspect that they had been told why he was, and that a dislike to further intercourse had suggested the departure. It was the feeling that never left him by day or night—that dogged his waking and haunted his dreams—that he was one to be shunned and avoided by his fellow-men. His pride, long dormant, arose under the supposed slight, and he was about to say a cold farewell, when the elder of the party, whose name was Sidney, said:

"How I wish you were coming with us!"

"Whither to?" said Cashel, hurriedly.

"To Venice—say, is this possible?"

"I am free to turn my steps in any direction—too free—for I have neither course to sail nor harbour to reach."

"Come with us, then, Roland," cried they all, "and our journey will be delightful."

"But why do you start so hurriedly? What is there to draw you from this at the very brightest season of the year?"

"There is rather that which draws us to Venice," said Sidney, colouring slightly; "but this is our secret; and you shall not hear it till we are on our way."

Roland's curiosity was not exacting; he asked no more: nor was it till they had proceeded some days on their journey that Sidney confided to him the sudden cause of their journey, which he did in the few words:

"La Ninetta is at Venice—she is at the 'Fenice.'"

"But who is La Ninetta? You forgot that you are speaking to one who lives out of the world."

"Not know La Ninetta!" exclaimed he; "never have seen her?"

"Never even heard of her."

To the pause which the shock of the first astonishment imposed there now succeeded a burst of enthusiastic description, in which the three youths vied with each other who should be most eloquent in praise. Her beauty, her gracefulness, the witching fascination of her movements, the enchanting captivation of her smile, were themes they never wearied of. Nor was it till he had suffered the enthusiasm to take its course that they would listen to his calm question:

"Is she an actress?"

"She is the first '*Ballarina*' of the world," cried one. "None ever did, nor ever will, dance like her."

"They say she is a *Prima Donna*, too; but how could such excellence be united in one creature?"

To their wild transports of praise Roland listened patiently, in the hope that he might glean something of her story; but they knew nothing, except that she was reputed to be a Sicilian, of a noble family, whose passion for the stage had excited the darkest enmity of her relatives; insomuch, that it was said she was tracked from city to city by hired assassins. She remained two days at Naples; she appeared but once at Rome; in Genoa, though announced, she never came to the theatre. Such were the extravagant tales, heightened by all the colour of romantic adventure—how, at one time, she had escaped from a royal palace by leaping into the sea—how, at another, she had ridden through a squadron of the Swiss Guard, sabre in hand, and got clean away from Bologna, where a cardinal's letter had arrested her. Incidents, the strangest, the least probable, were recounted of her: the high proffers of marriage she had rejected—the alliances, even with royal blood, she had refused. There was nothing, where her name figured, that seemed impossible; hers was a destiny above all the rules that guide humbler mortals.

Excellence, of whatever kind it be, has always this attraction—that it forms a standard by which men measure with each other their capacities of enjoyment and their powers of appreciation. Roland's curiosity was stimulated, therefore, to behold with his own eyes the wonder which had excited these youthful heroics. He had long since ceased to be sanguine on any subject; and he felt that he could sustain disappointment on graver matters than this.

When they reached Venice, they found that city in a state of enthusiastic excitement fully equal to their own. All the excesses into which admiration for art can carry a people insensible to other emotions than those

which minister to the senses, had been committed to welcome "La Regina de la Balla." Her *entrée* had been like a triumph; garlands of flowers, bouquets, rich tapestries floating from balconies, gondolas with bands of music; the civic authorities even, in robes of state, met her as she entered; strangers flocked in crowds from the other cities of the north, and even from parts beyond the Alps. The hotels were crammed with visitors, all eager to see one of whom every tongue was telling. A guard of honour stood before the palace in which she resided—as much a measure of necessity to repel the pressure of the anxious crowd as it was a mark of distinction.

The epidemic character of enthusiasm is well known. It is a fervour to which none can remain insensible. Cashel was soon to experience this. How could he preserve a cold indifference to the emotions which swayed thousands around him? How maintain his calm amid that host, which surged and fretted like the sea in a storm? La Ninetta was the one word repeated on every side; even to have seen her once was a distinction, and they who had already felt her fascinations were listened to as oracles.

She was to give but three representations at Venice, and ere Cashel's party had arrived all the tickets were already disposed of. By unceasing efforts, and considerable bribery, they contrived at last to obtain places for the first night, and early in the forenoon were admitted among a privileged number to take their seats. They who were thus, at a heavy cost, permitted to anticipate the general public, seemed—at least to Cashel's eyes—to fill the house; and so, in the dim indistinctness, they appeared. Wherever the eye turned, from the dark parterre, below, to the highest boxes, above, seemed filled with people. There was something almost solemn in that vast concourse, who sat subdued and silent in the misty half light of the theatre. The intense anxiety of expectation, the dreary gloom of the scene, contributed to spread a kind of awe-struck influence around, and brought up to Roland's memory a very different place and occasion—when, himself the observed of all observers, he stood in the felons' dock. Lost in the gloomy reverie these sad thoughts suggested, he took no note of time, nor marked the lagging hours which stole heavily past.

Suddenly the full glare of light burst forth, and displayed the great theatre crowded in every part. That glittering spectacle, into which beauty, splendour of dress, jewels, and rich uniforms enter, broke upon the sight, while a kind of magnetic sense of expectancy seemed to pervade all, and make conversation a mere murmur. The opera—a well-known one of a favourite composer, and admirably sustained—attracted little attention. The thrilling cadences, the brilliant passages, all fell upon senses that had

no relish for their excellence; and even the conventional good-breeding of the spectators was not proof against the signs of impatience that every now and then were manifested.

The third act at last began, and the scene represented a Spanish village of the New World, which, had it been even less correct and true to nature, had yet possessed no common attraction for Roland—recalling by a hundred little traits a long unvisited but well-remembered land. The usual troops of villagers paraded about in all that mock grace which characterises the peasant of the ballet. There were the same active mountaineers, the same venerable fathers, the comely matrons with little baskets of nothing carefully covered by snowy napkins, and the young maidens, who want only beauty to make them what they affect to be. Roland gazed at all this with the indifference a stupid prelude ever excites, and would rapidly have been wearied, when a sudden pause in the music ensued, and then a deathlike stillness reigned through the house. The orchestra again opened, and with a melody which thrilled through every fibre of Roland's heart. It was a favourite Mexican air; one to which, in happier times, he had often danced. What myriads of old memories came flocking to his mind as he listened! What fancies came thronging around him! Every bar of the measure beat responsively with some association of the past. He leaned his head downwards, and, covering his face with his hands, all thought of the present was lost, and in imagination he was back again on the green sward before the "Villa de las Noches;" the mocking-bird and the nightingale were filling the air with their warblings; the sounds of gay voices, the plash of fountains, the meteor-like flashes of the fire-flies, were all before him. He knew not that a thousand voices were shouting around him in wildest enthusiasm—that bouquets of rarest flowers strewed the stage—that every form adulation can take was assumed towards one on whom every eye save his own was bent; and that, before her, rank, beauty, riches—all that the world makes its idols—were now bending in deepest homage. He knew nothing of all this, as he sat with bent-down head, lost in his own bright dreamings. At length he looked up, but, instead of his fancy being dissipated by reality, it now assumed form and substance. There was the very scenery of that far-off land; the music was the national air of Mexico; the dance was the haughty Manolo; and, oh! was it that his brain was wandering—had reason, shaken by many a rude shock, given way at last? The dancer—she, on whose witching graces every glance was bent—was Maritaña! There she stood, more beautiful than he had ever seen her before; her dark hair encircled with brilliants, her black eyes flashing in all the animation of triumph, and her fairly-rounded limbs the perfection symmetry.

Oh, no! this was some mind-drawn picture; this was the shadowy image that failing intellect creates ere all is lost in chaos and confusion! Such was the conflict in his brain as, with staring eyeballs, he tracked her as she moved, and followed each graceful bend, each proud commanding attitude. Nor was it till the loud thunder-roll of applause had drawn her to the front of the stage, to acknowledge the favour by a deep reverence, that he became assured beyond all question. Then, when he saw the long dark lashes fall upon the rounded cheek, when he beheld the crossed arm upon her bosom, and marked the taper fingers he had so often held within his own, in a transport of feeling, where pride, and joy, and shame, and sorrow, had each their share, he cried aloud:

"Oh, Maritaña! Maritaña! Shame! shame!"

Scarcely had the wild cry re-echoed through the house than, with a scream, whose terror pierced every heart, the girl started from her studied attitude, and rushed forward towards the foot-lights, her frighted looks and pale cheeks seeming ghastly with emotion.

"Where?—where?" cried she. "Speak again—I know the voice!" But already a scene of uproar and confusion had arisen in the parterre around Cashel, whose interruption of the piece called down universal reprobation; and cries of "Out with him!" "Away with him!" rose on every side.

Struggling madly and fiercely against his assailants, Cashel for a brief space seemed likely to find his way to the stage; but overcome by numbers, he was subdued at last, and consigned to the hands of the guard. His last look, still turned to the "scene," showed him Maritaña, as she was carried away senseless and fainting.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

THE FATE OF KEANE—HIS DEPOSITION.

The laughing Seine, whose midnight flood
Shrouds many a deed of crime and blood!
WARREN.

THEY alone who have passed much of their lives on the Continent of Europe can estimate the amount of excitement caused by such an incident as that we have just related. So much of life is centred in the theatre, so many interests revolve around it, engrossing, as it does, so much of the passions and the prejudices of those whose existence seldom rises above the pursuit of pleasure, that anything which might interrupt "the scene," which should disturb its progress, or mar its effect, is sure to evoke the loudest evidence of public indignation. Where a high cultivation of the arts is employed to gloss over the corruptions of a vicious system, it may be easily conceived how men would be judged more leniently for crimes than for those minor offences which rebel against the usages of good society.

The "Ballet interrupted in its most interesting moment," "La Ninetta carried away fainting at the very commencement of her most attractive movement," insulted—so it was rumoured—"by some offensive epithet of a Spaniard," were enough to carry indignation to the highest pitch, and it needed the protection of the guard to screen him from the popular vengeance.

After a night of feverish anxiety, where hopes and fears warred and conflicted with each other, Cashel was early on the following morning conducted before the Chief Commissary of the Police. His passport represented him as a Spaniard, and he adhered to the pretended nationality to avoid the dreaded notoriety of his name.

While he answered the usual questions as to age, religion, and profession, an officer deposited a sealed paper in the hands of the Prefetto; who, opening it, appeared to study the contents with much care.

"You have called yourself Il Señor Roland da Castel, Sir?" said the official, staring fixedly upon him. "Have you always gone by this name?"

"In Mexico and the New World I was ever known as such. In England men call me Roland Cashel."

"Which is your more fitting appellation—is it not?"

"Yes."

"You are then an English, and not a Spanish subject?"

He nodded assent.

"You were, however, in a South American service?" said the Prefetto, reading from his paper.

Roland bowed again.

"In which service, or pretended service, you commanded a slaver?"

"This is untrue," said Cashel, calmly.

"I have it asserted here, however, by those of whose statements you have already acknowledged the accuracy."

"It is not the less a falsehood."

"Perhaps you will allow more correctness to the next allegation? It is said that, under the pretended right to a large inheritance, you visited England, and succeeded in preferring a claim to a vast estate?"

Roland bent his head in assent.

"And that to this property you possessed neither right nor title?"

Roland started: the charge involved a secret he believed unknown, save to himself, Hammond, and Linton, and he could not master his surprise enough to reply.

"But a weightier allegation is yet behind, Sir," said the Prefetto, sternly. "Are you the same Roland Cashel whose trial for murder occupied the assizes of Ennis in the spring of the year 18—?"

"I am," said Cashel, faintly.

"Your escape of conviction depended on the absence of a material witness for the prosecution, I believe?"

"I was acquitted because I was not guilty, Sir."

"On that point we are not agreed," said the Prefetto, sarcastically; "but you have admitted enough to warrant me in the course I shall pursue respecting you—the fact of a false name and passport, the identity with a well-known character admitted—I have now to detain you in custody until such time as the Consul of your country may take steps for your conveyance to England, where already new evidence of your criminality awaits you. Yes, prisoner, the mystery which involved your guilt is at length about to be dissipated, and the day of expiation draws nigh."

Roland did not speak. Shame at the degraded position he occupied, even in the eyes of those with whom he had associated, overwhelmed him and he suffered himself to be led away without a word.

Alone in the darkness and silence of a prison, he sat indifferent to what might befal him, wearied of himself and all the world.

Days, even weeks passed on, and none inquired after him; he seemed forgotten of all, when the Consul, who had been absent, having returned, it

was discovered that the allegations respecting the murder were not sufficient to warrant his being transmitted to England, and that the only charge against him lay in the assumed nationality—an offence it was deemed sufficiently expiated by his imprisonment. He was free then once more—free to wander forth into the world where his notoriety had been already proclaimed, and where, if not his guilt, his shame was published.

Of Maritaña all that he could learn was that she had left Venice without again appearing in public; but in what direction none knew accurately. Cashel justly surmised that she had not gone without seeing him once more, had it not been from the compulsion of others; and if he grieved to think they were never to meet more, he felt a secret consolation on reflecting how much of mutual shame and sorrow was spared them. Shame was indeed the predominant emotion of his mind; shame for his now sullied name—his character tarnished by the allegations of crime; and shame for her, degraded to a "*Ballarina.*"

Had Fortune another reverse in store for him? Was there one cherished hope still remaining? Had life one solitary spot to which he could now direct his weary steps, and be at rest? The publicity which late events had given to his name, rendered him more timid and retiring than ever. A morbid sense of modesty—a shrinking dread of the slights to which he would be exposed in the world—made him shun all intercourse, and live a life of utter seclusion.

Like all men who desire solitude, he soon discovered that it is alone attainable in great cities. Where the great human tide runs full and strong, the scattered wrecks are scarcely noticeable.

To Paris, therefore, he repaired; not to that brilliant Paris where sensuality and vice costume themselves in all the brilliant hues derived from the highest intellectual culture, but to the dark and gloomy Paris which lies between the arms of the Seine—the "Ile St. Louis." There, amid the vestiges of an extinct feudalism, and the trials of a present wretchedness, he passed his life in strict solitude. In a mean apartment, whose only solace was the view of the river, with a few books picked up on a neighbouring stall, and the moving crowd beneath his window to attract his wandering thoughts, he lived his lonely life. The past alone occupied his mind: for the future he had neither care nor interest, but of his bygone life he could dream for hours. These memories he used to indulge each evening in a particular spot; it was an old and ruinous stair which descended to the river, from a little wooden platform, near where he lived. It had been long disused, and suffered to fall into rot and decay. Here he sat, each night watching the twinkling lights that glittered along the river, and listening to the distant hum of that great hive of pleasure that lay beyond it.

That the neighbourhood about was one of evil repute and danger, mattered little to one who set small store by his life, and whose stalwart figure and signs of personal prowess were not unknown in the quarter. The unbroken solitude of the spot was its attraction to him, and truly none ever ventured near it after nightfall.

There he was sitting, one night, as usual, musing, as was his wont. It was a period when men's minds were stirred by the expectation of some great but unknown event: a long political stagnation—the dead sea of hopeless apathy—was beginning to be ruffled by short and fitful blasts that told of a coming hurricane. Vague rumours of a change—scattered sentences of some convulsion, whence proceeding, or whither tending, none could guess—were abroad. The long-sleeping terrors of a past time of blood were once more remembered, and men talked of the guillotine and the scaffold as household themes. It was the summer of 1830—that memorable year, whose deeds were to form but the prologue of the great drama we are to-day the spectators at. Roland heard these things, as he who wanders along the shore at night may hear the brooding signs of a gathering storm, but has no "venture on the sea." He thought of them—with a certain interest, too—but it was with that interest into which no personal feeling enters; for how could great convulsions of states affect *him?* How could the turn of fortune raise or depress him?

He sat, now pondering over his own destiny, now wondering whither the course of events to come was tending, when he heard the plash of oars, and the rushing sound of a boat moving through the water in the direction of the stair. The oars, which at some moments were plied vigorously, ceased to move at others; and, as well as Cashel could mark, the course of the boat seemed once or twice to be changed. Roland descended to the lowest step of the ladder, the better to see what this might portend. That terrible river, on whose smiling eddies the noonday sun dances so joyously, covers beneath the shadow of night crimes the most awful and appalling.

As Cashel listened, he perceived that the rowing had ceased, and two voices, whose accents sounded like altercation, could be heard.

The boat, drifting, meanwhile, downward on the fast current, was now nearly opposite to where he sat, but only perceptible as a dark speck upon the water. The night was calm, without a breath of wind, and on the vapour-charged atmosphere sounds floated dull and heavily; still Cashel could hear the harsh tones of men in angry dispute, and to his amazement they spoke in English.

"It's the old story," cried one, whose louder voice and coarser accents bespoke him the inferior in condition—"the old story that I am sick of listening to—when you have luck! when you have luck!"

"I used not to have a complaint against Fortune," said the other. "Before we met, she had treated me well for many a year."

"And 'twas me that changed it, I suppose," said the first, in the same insolent tone as before: "do you mean that?"

"The world has gone ill with me since that day."

"And whose fault is that?"

"Partly yours," said the other, in a slow, deliberate voice, every syllable of which thrilled through Cashel's heart as he listened. "Had you secured the right man, it was beyond the power of Fortune to hurt either of us. That fatal, fatal mistake!"

"How could I help it?" cried the other, energetically; "the night was as dark as this—it was between two high banks—there was nothing to be seen but a figure of a man coming slowly along—you yourself told me who it would be—I didn't wait for more; and troth!"—here he gave a fiendish laugh—"troth! you'll allow the work was well done."

"It was a most determined murder," said the other, thoughtfully.

"Murder! murder!" screamed the first, in a voice of fierce passion; "and is it you that calls it a murder?"

"No matter how it is called. Let us speak of something else."

"Very well. Let us talk about the price of it. It isn't paid yet!"

"Is it nothing that I have taken you from abject, starving misery, from a life of cold, want, and wretchedness, to live at ease in the first city of the universe? Is it no part of the price that you spend your days in pleasure and your nights in debauch?—that, with the appetite of the peasant you partake of the excesses of the gentleman? Is it no instalment of the debt, I say, that you, who might now be ground down to the very earth as a slave at home, dare to lift your head and speak thus to *me?*"

"And is it *you* dares to tell me this?" cried the other, in savage energy; "is it you, that made me a murderer, and then think that I can forget it because I'm a drunkard? But I don't forget it! I'll never forget it! I see him still, as he lay gasping before me, and trying to beg for mercy when he couldn't ask for it. I see him every day when I'm in a lonely place; and, oh! he's never away from me at night, with his bloody hands on his head trying to save it, and screaming out for God to help him. And what did I get for it? answer me that," yelled he, in accents shrill with passion. "Is it my wife begging from door to door—is it my children naked and hungry—is it my little place, a ruin and a curse over it—or is it myself trying to forget it in drink, not knowing the day nor the hour that it will rise up against me, and that I'll be standing in the dock where I saw *him* that you tried to murder too?"

"There is no use in all this passion," said the other, calmly; "let us be friends, Tom: it is our interest to be so."

"Them's the very words you towld Mr. Phillis, and the next day he was taken up for the robbery, and you had him transported."

"Phillis was a fool, and paid the penalty of a fool; but you are a shrewd fellow, who can see to his own advantage. Now listen to me calmly: were it not for bad luck, we might all of us have had more money now than we could count or squander. Had Maritaña continued upon the stage, her gains would by this time have been enormous. The bank, too, would have prospered; her beauty would have drawn around us all that was wealthy and dissipated in the world of fashion; we could have played what stake we pleased. Princes, ambassadors, ministers of state, would have been our game. Curses be on his head who spoiled this glorious plan! From that unhappy night at Venice she never would appear again, nor could she. The shock has been like a blight upon her. You have seen her yourself, and know what it has made her."

The artifice by which the speaker contrived to change the topic, and withdraw the other from a painful subject to one of seeming confidence, was completely successful; and in the altered tone of voice might be read the change which had come over him.

"You wish to go to America, Tom?" continued he, after a pause.

"Ay; I never feel safe here. I'm too near home."

"Well, if everything prospers with us, you shall have the money by Tuesday—Wednesday at farthest. Rica has at last found a clue to old Corrigan, and, although he seems in great poverty, his name upon a bill will still raise some hundreds."

"I don't care who pays it, but I must get it," said the other, whose savage mood seemed to have returned. "I'll not stay here. 'Tis little profit or pleasure I have standin' every night to see the crowds that are passing in, to be cheated out of their money—to hear the clink of the goold I'm never to handle—and to watch all the fine livin' and coortin' that I've no share in."

"Be satisfied. You shall have the money; I pledge my word upon it."

"I don't care for your word. I have a better security than ever it was."

"And what may that be?" said the other, cautiously.

"Your neck in a halter, Mr. Linton," said he, laughing ironically. "Ay, ye don't understand me—poor innocent that ye are! but I know what I'm saying, and I have good advice about it besides."

"How do you mean good advice, Tom?" said Linton, with seeming kindliness of manner. "Whom have you consulted?"

"One that knows the law well," said Tom, with all the evasive shrewdness of his class.

"And he tells you——"

"He tells me that the devil a bit betther off you'd be than myself—that you are what they call an 'accessory'—that's the word; I mind it well."

"And what does that mean?"

"A chap that plans the work, but hasn't the courage to put hand to it."

"That's an accessory, is it?" said the other, slowly.

"Just so." He paused for a few seconds, then added, "Besides, if I was to turn 'prover, he says that *I*'d only be transported, and 'tis *you* would be hanged"—the last word was uttered in a harsh and grating tone, and followed by a laugh of insolent mockery—"so that you see 'tis better be honest with me, and pay me my hire."

"You shall have it, by G——!" said Linton, with a deep vehemence; and, drawing a pistol from his bosom, he fired. The other fell, with a loud cry, to the bottom of the boat. A brief pause ensued, and then Linton raised the body in his arms to throw it over. A faint struggle showed that life was not extinct, but all resistance was impossible. The lightness of the boat, however, made the effort difficult; and it was only by immense exertion that he could even lift the heavy weight half way; and at last, when, by a great effort, he succeeded in laying the body over the gunwale, the boat lost its balance, and upset. With a bold spring, Linton dashed into the current, and made for shore; but almost as he did so, another and a stronger swimmer, who had thrown off his clothes for the enterprise, had reached the spot, and, grasping the inert mass as it was about to sink, swam with the bleeding body to the bank.

When Cashel gained the stairs, he threw the wounded man upon his shoulder, for signs of life were still remaining, and hastened to a cabaret near. A surgeon was soon procured, and the bullet was discovered to have penetrated the chest, cutting in its passage some large blood-vessel, from which the blood flowed copiously. That the result must be fatal it was evident; but as the bleeding showed signs of abatement, it seemed possible life might be protracted some hours. No time was therefore to be lost in obtaining the dying man's declaration, and a Juge d'Instruction, accompanied by a notary, was immediately on the spot. As the surgeon had surmised, a coagulum had formed in the wounded vessel, and, the bleeding being thus temporarily arrested, the man rallied into something like strength, and with a mind perfectly conscious and collected. To avoid the shock which the sight of Cashel might occasion, Roland did not appear at the bedside.

Nor need we linger either at such a scene, nor witness that fearful struggle between the hope of mercy and the dread consciousness of its all but impossibility. The dying confession has nothing new for the reader; the secret history of the crime is already before him, and it only remains to speak of those events which followed Keane's flight from Ireland. As Linton's servant he continued for years to travel about the Continent, constantly sustained by the hope that the price of his crime would one day be forthcoming, and as invariably put off by the excuse, that play, on which he entirely depended for means, had been unlucky, but that better times were certainly in store for him. The struggles and difficulties of an existence thus maintained; the terrible consciousness of an unexpiated crime; the constant presence of one who knew the secret of the other, and might at any moment of anger, or in some access of dissipation, reveal it, made up a life of torture to which death would be a boon; added to this, that they frequently found themselves in the same city with Cashel, whom Linton never dared to confront. At Messina they fell in with Rica, as the proprietor of a gaming-table which Linton continually frequented. His consummate skill at play, his knowledge of life, and particularly the life of gamblers, his powers of agreeability, soon attracted Rica's notice, and an intimacy sprang up which became a close friendship—if such a league can be called by such a name

By the power of an ascendancy acquired most artfully, and by persuasive flatteries of the most insidious kind, he induced Rica to bring Maritaña on the stage; where her immense success had replenished their coffers far more rapidly and abundantly than play. At Naples, however, an incident similar to what happened at Venice was nigh having occurred. She was recognised by a young Spaniard who had known her in Mexico; and as the whole assumed history of her noble birth and Sicilian origin was thus exposed to contradiction, they took measures to get rid of this unwelcome witness. They managed to hide among his effects some dies and moulds for coining—an offence then, as ever, rife at Naples. A police investigation, in which bribery had its share, was followed by a mock trial, and the young fellow was sentenced to the galleys for seven years, with hard labour.

Their career from this moment was one of unchanging success. Maritaña's beauty attracted to the play-table all that every city contained of fashion, wealth, and dissipation. In her ignorance of the world she was made to believe that her position was one the most exalted and enviable. The homage she received, the devotion exhibited on every side, the splendour of her life, her dress, her jewels, her liveries, dazzled and delighted her. The very exercise of her abilities was a source of enthusiastic pleasure

to one who loved admiration. Nor had she, perhaps, awoke from this delusion, had not the heart-uttered cry of Roland burst the spell that bound her, and evoked the maiden's shame in her young heart. Then—with a revulsion that almost shook reason itself—she turned with abhorrence from a career associated with whatever could humiliate and disgrace. Entreaties, prayers, menaces—all were unavailing to induce her to appear again; and soon, indeed, her altered looks and failing health rendered it impossible. A vacant unmeaning smile, or a cold impassive stare, usurped the place of an expression that used to shine in joyous brilliancy. Her step, once bounding and elastic, became slow and uncertain. She seldom spoke; when she did, her accents were heavy, and her thoughts seemed languid, as though her mind was weary. None could have recognised in that wan and worn face, that frail and delicate figure, the proud and beautiful Maritaña.

She lived now in total seclusion. None ever saw her, save Rica, who used to come and sit beside her each day, watching, with Heaven alone knows what mixture of emotion! that wasting form and decaying cheek. What visions of ambition Linton might yet connect with her none knew or could guess; but he followed the changing fortunes of her health with an interest too deep and earnest to be mistaken for mere compassion. Such, then, was her sad condition when they repaired to Paris, and, in one of the most spacious hotels of the Rue Richelieu, established their "Bank of Rouge et Noir." This costly establishment vied in luxury and splendour with the most extravagant of those existing in the time of the Empire. All that fastidious refinement and taste could assemble, in objects of art and *vertù*, graced the *salons*. The cookery, the wines, the service of the different menials, rivalled the proudest households of the nobility.

A difficult etiquette restricted the admission to persons of acknowledged rank and station, and even these were banded together by the secret tie of a political purpose, for it was now the eve of that great convulsion which was to open once more in Europe the dread conflict between the masses and the few.

While Linton engaged deep in play, and still deeper in politics, "making his book," as he called it, "to win with whatever horse he pleased," one dreadful heartsore never left him: this was Keane, whose presence continually reminded him of the past, and brought up besides many a dread for the future.

It would have been easy at any moment for Linton to have disembarrassed himself of the man by a sum of money; but then came the reflection —"What is to happen when, with exhausted means and dissolute habits, this fellow shall find himself in some foreign country? Is he not likely, in a moment of reckless despair, to reveal the whole story of our guilt? Can

I even trust him in hours of convivial abandonment and debauch? Vengeance may, at any instant, overrule in such a nature the love of life—remorse may seize upon him. He is a Romanist, and may confess the murder, and be moved by his priest to bring home the guilt to the Protestant." Such were the motives which Linton never ceased to speculate on and think over, always reverting to the one same conviction, that he must keep the man close to his person, until the hour might come when he could rid himself of him for ever.

The insolent demeanour of the fellow—his ruffian assurance—the evidence of a power that he might wield at will—became at last intolerable. Linton saw this "shadow on his path" wherever he wandered. The evil was insupportable from the very fact that it occupied his thoughts when great and momentous events required them. It was like the paroxysm of some painful disease, that came at moments when health and calm of spirit were most wanted. To feel this, to recognise it thoroughly, and to resolve to overcome it, were, with Linton, the work of a moment. "His hour is come," said he, at length; "the company at La Morgue to-morrow shall be graced by a guest of my inviting."

Although to a mind prolific in schemes of villany the manner of the crime could offer no difficulty, strange enough, his nature revolted against being himself the agent of the guilt. It was not fear, for he was a man of nerve and courage, and was, besides, certain to be better armed than his adversary. It was not pity, nor any feeling that bordered on pity, deterred him; it was some instinctive shrinking from an act of ruffianism; it was the blood of a man of birth that curdled at the thought of that which his mind associated with criminals of the lowest class—the conventional feeling of Honour surpassing all the dictates of common Humanity!

Nothing short of the pressing emergency of the hour could have overcome these scruples, but Keane's insolence was now in itself enough to compromise him, and Linton saw that but one remedy remained, and that it could not be deferred. Constant habits of intercourse with men of a dangerous class in the Faubourgs and the Cité gave the excuse for the boating excursion at night. The skiff was hired by Keane himself, who took up Linton at a point remote from where he started, and thus no clue could be traced to the person who accompanied him. The remainder is in the reader's memory, and now we pursue our story.

The surgeon who examined Keane's wound not only pronounced it inevitably fatal, but that the result must rapidly ensue. No time was, therefore, to be lost in obtaining the fullest revelations of the dying man, and also in taking the promptest measures to secure the guilty party.

The authorities of the British Embassy lent a willing aid to Cashel in this

matter, and an express was at one despatched to London for the assistance of a police force, with the necessary warrant for Linton's arrest. Meanwhile Keane was watched with the narrowest vigilance, and so secretly was everything done, that his very existence was unknown beyond the precincts of the room he inhabited.

## CHAPTER LXX.

### THE "BANK OF ROUGE ET NOIR."

Vice has its own ambitions.
MORTON.

IT was already nigh daybreak. The "Bank" had long since been closed, and none remained of Rica's guests save the most inveterate gamblers, who were now assembled in a small room in a secret part of the establishment, presided over by the host himself.

The persons here met were no bad representatives of the "play world," of which they formed an important part. They were men, many of them of the highest rank, who had no other object or pursuit in life than play! Mingling to a certain extent in public life, they performed before the world their various parts as soldiers, statesmen, courtiers, or ambassadors. Their thoughts meanwhile travelled but one solitary track. The only field in which their ambition ranged was the green cloth of the rouge et noir table. As soldiers they would have lost a battle with more fortitude than as gamblers they would lose a bet. As statesmen they would have risked the fate of a kingdom to secure a good "martingale" at play. Men of highest breeding, in society, abounding in all the graces that adorn intercourse; here, they were taciturn, reserved, almost morose, never suffering their attention to wander for an instant from that engrossing theme where gain and loss contended.

Into this society, noiseless and still as stifled feelings and repressed emotions could make it, Linton entered; a full dress replacing the clothes he so lately wore, not a trace of unusual agitation on his features, he seemed in every respect the easy man of fashion for which the world took him.

A slight nod—a familiar motion of the hand—were all the greetings which passed between him and such of his acquaintances as deigned to raise their heads from the game. Linton perceived at once that the play was high, nor did he need to cast a look at the mountain of gold, the coinage of

every European nation, to know that the "Bank" was a winner. The chief player was a young noble of the king's household, the Duke de Marsac, a man of originally immense fortune, the greater part of which he had already squandered at play. His full dress of the Court, for he had dined the day before at the royal table, contrasted strangely with the haggard expression of his features, while his powdered hair hung in stray and dishevelled masses over his temples—even his deep lace ruffles, which in his agitation he had torn to very rags, all bespoke the abandonment of the loser. Linton, who always passed for a mere frequenter of the house, unconnected with its interests in any way, saw at a glance that a perfectly quiet demeanour was imperatively necessary; that not a word should be uttered, not a syllable let fall, which should break the spell of that enchantment that was luring on the gambler to his ruin.

No man was more master of the hundred little artifices by which the spectator—"the gallery" is the play phrase—can arouse the hopes and stimulate the expectations of the losing player. He knew to perfection when to back the unlucky gambler, and how to throw out those half-muttered words of encouragement so dear and precious to the loser's heart. But if he knew all this well, he also knew that there are times when these interferences become impertinent, and when the intense excitement of the game will not admit of the distraction of sympathy. Linton, therefore, was silent; he took his seat behind the chair of one of his intimates, and watched the table attentively.

At the close of a game wherein fortune vacillated for a long time, the Duke lost above a hundred thousand francs—a kind of pause, like a truce, seemed to intervene, and Rica sat with the cards before him, not making preparations for a new deal.

"Fortune is too decidedly your enemy this evening, my Lord Duke; I am really ashamed to see you lose thus continuously."

"There is a certain Château de Marlier, which belongs to me, near St. Germain," said the Duke. "It has been valued, with its grounds, at upwards of seven hundred thousand francs; are you disposed to advance so much upon it?"

"As loan or purchase?" asked Rica.

"Whichever you prefer. If the choice were mine, I should say as a loan."

"Parbleu! it is a beautiful spot," said one of the players. "It was formerly a hunting seat of Louis XIV."

"You are quite correct, Sir," said the Duke. "It was a present from that monarch to my grandfather, and possesses, amongst its other advantages, the privilege of giving the owner a ducal coronet. If any man be weak

enough in these days to care for the distinction, he can be Duke de Marlier on easy terms.

"Take him," whispered Linton in Rica's ear. "I accept the venture as my own."

"Were I to accept this offer, my Lord Duke," said Rica, "am I to understand that no mortgages nor charges of any kind are in existence against this property?"

"It is perfectly unencumbered," said the Duke, calmly. "There are some half-dozen pictures—a Velasquez or two amongst them—which I should reserve as my own; but everything else would belong to the purchaser."

"The cost of transferring property in France is considerable, I believe, and there is some difficulty respecting the right of foreigners to inherit," said Rica, again.

"Take him, I say; the risk is mine," whispered Linton, whose impatience at the other's caution became each moment stronger.

"Do you accept, Monsieur de Rica?" said the Duke, pushing back his chair from the table, as though about to rise, "or is there to be an armistice for the present?"

"It would be ungenerous, my Lord Duke, to refuse you anything in my power to grant," said Rica, obsequiously. "As a high-spirited but unfortunate player——"

"Let not this weigh with you, Sir," said the Duke, proudly; "the chances are that I leave my estate behind me on this table. That is the only consideration for you to entertain."

"Take him at once; it will be too late, soon," whispered Linton again.

"I agree, my Lord," said Rica, with a slight sigh, as if yielding in opposition to his inclination. "When is the money to be forthcoming?"

"Now, Sir. Here, upon this spot; here, where, before I rise, I am determined to have my revenge."

"The bank always closes at daybreak," said Rica, gravely.

"Upon this occasion it will not," said the Duke, with an air of command.

"Be it so, my Lord Duke; you shall have everything as you wish it. I only call these gentlemen to witness that this proceeding is contrary to my desire, and must form no precedent for the future."

"Few will be found to ask for such concession," said the Duke, tartly. "Let us have no more trifling, but begin."

"I back the Duke," said Linton, opening his pocket-book, and taking out a roll of bank-notes. "Whatever I have touched to-night has gone luckily with me, and I am sure to bring him good fortune."

"If I might ask a favour, Monsieur," said the Duke, "it would be to leave me to deal single-handed with my destiny."

"As you please, my Lord," said Linton, gaily. "If you will not accept me as ally, you must have me as adversary. Charley, make room for me beside you," continued he, addressing a man whose haggard cheek and deep sunken eye could scarcely recal the features of Lord Charles Frobisher.

"He's in for it," muttered Frobisher, as Linton seated himself at his side.

"We shall see," said Linton, calmly, arranging his note-book before him. Meanwhile, Rica was busily engaged in counting out to the Duke the heavy sum of the purchase. This occupied a considerable time, during which Linton amused the others with a running fire of that gossipry which goes the round of Parisian society, and takes in the world of politics, of literature, of art, and of morals. The eventful period was full of rumours, and none knew better than Linton how to exalt some into certainty, and degrade others into mere absurdity. "If the bank wins," said he, laughingly, at the close of some observation on the condition of parties, "our friend Rica will be the last duke in Europe."

"Bah!" said an officer of the Royal Guard; "grape and canister are just as effectual as ever they were. There is nothing to be apprehended from the mob. Two battalions of infantry and a squadron of hussars will carry the 'ordinances,' if the ministry but give the order."

"I wish they would begin the game," said Frobisher, querulously, for he took no interest in any topic but that of play.

"Has any one given orders that the doors shall be close-barred and locked?" said another. "The police will be here presently."

"What should bring the police here, Sir?" said Linton, turning suddenly towards the speaker with a look of almost insolent defiance.

"They are making perquisitions everywhere the last few days," said the youth, abashed by the tone and manner of the question.

"Ah! so they are—very true. I beg your pardon," cried Linton, affecting a smile. "We are so intent upon our game here, that one actually forgets what is occurring in the greater game that is playing without."

"If there's to be no more play I'm off to bed," yawned Frobisher, as he stretched himself along the chairs. A group had meanwhile gathered round a table where refreshments and wine were laid out, and were invigorating themselves for the coming campaign.

"I remember the last *séance* with closed doors I assisted at," said a handsome middle-aged man, with a grey moustache, and short-cut grey hair, "was in the stable at Fontainebleau. We played for seventeen hours, and when we separated we discovered that the Empire was at an end, and the Emperor departed!"

"We might do something of the same kind now, Blancharde," said another; "it would be no difficult matter, I fancy, to play an old Dynasty out and a new one in at this moment."

"Hush, Rozlan! Marsac is not one 'of us,'" whispered the former, cautiously.

"He's going the shortest way to become so, notwithstanding. Nothing enlarges the sphere of political vision like being ruined! One always becomes liberal, in the political sense, when it is impossible to be so in any other!"

The chatting now turned on the events that were then impending, great diversity of opinion existing as to whether the King would insist upon carrying the "ordinances," and a still wider divergence as to what result would follow. During this discussion, Frobisher's impatience went beyond all control, and at last he rose, declaring that he would remain no longer.

"You forget that the doors are locked for twenty-four hours, Sir," said another, "and neither can any one leave or enter the room before that time."

"We are more sacred than a privy council or a chapter of the knights of St. Louis," said Rozlan.

"Now then to see who is the next Duc de Marlier!" whispered Linton in Rica's ear. "Let us begin."

"One word with you, Linton," whispered Rica; "don't bet high, it distracts my attention—make a mere game of amusement, for this will be a hard struggle, and it must be the last."

"So I perceive," rejoined Linton; "events are coming fast; we must be off ere the tide overtake us."

"The game, the game!" cried Frobisher, striking the table with his rake.

"And Maritaña?" whispered Linton, holding Rica by the arm.

The other grew lividly pale, and his lip quivered as he said, "Is this the time, Linton——"

"It is the very time," rejoined the other, determinedly, "and I will have my answer now. You cannot equivocate with me."

"I do not seek to do so. I have told you always what I tell you still—I cannot coerce her."

"There will be no need. This dukedom will do the business. I know her well—better than you do. See, they are watching us yonder. Say the word at once—it is agreed."

"Hear me, Linton——"

"I'll hear nothing; save the one word, 'agreed.'"

"Let me but explain——"

"There is nothing to explain. The betrothal you allude to is—as none knows better than yourself—an idle ceremony; and if she loves the fellow,

so much the more urgent are the reasons for my request. Be quick, I say."

"If she consent——"

"She shall. My Lord Duke, a thousand pardons, I beg, for this delay; but Rica has been tormenting me these ten minutes by the refusal of a petty favour. He is become reasonable at last; and now for the combat!"

The party seated themselves like men about to witness an exciting event; and, although each had his venture on the game, the Duke was the great object of interest, and speculation was high as to how the struggle was to end.

It is no part of our object to follow the changing fortunes of that long contest, nor watch the vacillating chances which, alternately, elevated to hope and lowered to very desperation. Before the day began to dawn, every player, save the Duke, had ceased to bet. Some, worn out and exhausted, had sunk to sleep upon the rich ottomans; others, drinking deep of champagne, seemed anxious to forget everything. Frobisher, utterly ruined, sat in the same place at the table, mechanically marking the game, on which he had no longer a stake, and muttering exclamations of joy or disappointment at imaginary gains and losses, for he still fancied that he was betting large sums, and participating in all the varying emotions of a gambler's life.

The luck of the bank continued. Play how he would, boldly "back the colour," or try to suit the fitful fortunes of the game, the Duke went on losing.

Were such an ordeal one to evoke admiration, it could scarcely be withheld from him, who, with an unwearied brain and unbroken temper, sat patiently there, fighting foot to foot, contesting every inch of ground, and, even in defeat, preserving the calm equanimity of his high breeding. Behind his chair stood Linton—a flush of triumph on his cheek as he continued to behold the undeviating course of luck that attended the bank. "Another deal like that," muttered he, "and I shall quarter the arms of Marlier with Linton."

The words were scarcely uttered, when a deep sigh broke from the Duke—it was the first that had escaped him—and he buried his head between his hands. Rica looked over at Linton, and a slight, almost imperceptible, motion of his eyebrows signalled that the battle was nigh over.

"Well! how is the game? Am I betting?—what's the colour?" said the Duke, passing his clammy hand across his brow.

"I am waiting for you, my Lord Duke," said Rica, obsequiously.

"I'm ready—quite ready," cried the other. "Am I the only player? fancied that some others were betting. "Where's my Lord Charles?—ah I see him. And Mr. Linton—is he gone?"

"He has just left the room, my Lord Duke. Will you excuse me if I follow him for an instant?" And at the same moment Rica arose, and left the chamber with hasty steps.

It was at the end of a long corridor, tapping gently at a door, Linton stood, as Rica came up.

"What! is't over already?" said Linton, with a look of angry impatience.

"This is not fair, Linton!" said Rica, endeavouring to get nearest to the door.

"What is not fair?" said the other, imperiously. "You told me a while ago that she must pronounce, herself, upon her own future. Well, I am willing to leave it to that issue."

"But she is unfit to do so at present," said Rica, entreatingly. "You know well how unsettled is her mind, and how wandering are her faculties. There are moments when she scarcely knows *me*—her father."

"It is enough if she remember *me*," said Linton, insolently. "Her intellects will recover—the cloud will pass away; and, if it should not, still—as my wife, it is an object I have set my heart on; and so, let me pass."

"I cannot—I will not peril her chances of recovery by such a shock," said Rica, firmly; then changing suddenly, he spoke in accents of deep feeling: "Remember, Linton, how I offered you *her* whom you acknowledged you preferred. I told you the means of coercion in my power, and pledged myself to use them. It was but two days since I discovered where they were; to-morrow we will go there together. I will claim her as my daughter: the laws of France are imperative in the matter. Mary Leicester shall be yours."

"I care for her no longer," said Linton, haughtily. "I doubt, indeed, if I ever cared for her. She is not one to suit my fortunes. Maritaña is, or at least may become so."

"Be it so, but not now, Linton; the poor child's reason is clouded."

"When she hears she is a Duchess," said Linton, half sneeringly, "it will dispel the gloomy vapour."

"I implore you—I entreat—on my knees I beg of you——" said the distracted father, and, unable to utter more, he sank powerless at Linton's feet; meanwhile the other opened the door, and, stepping noiselessly over the prostrate figure, entered the room.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### ARREST OF LINTON.

Like a bold criminal he stood,
Calm in his guilt.

THE FORGER.

WITH firm step and head high, Linton entered a room where the dim half-light of the closed jalousies made each object indistinct. He halted for an instant, to cast a searching glance around, and then advanced to a door at the farthest end of the apartment; at this he tapped twice gently with his knuckles. He waited for an instant, and then repeated his summons. Still no answer, even though he rapped a third time, and louder than before. Linton now turned the handle noiselessly, and opened the door. For a moment or two he seemed uncertain whether to advance or retire; but his resolution was soon made—he entered and closed the door behind him.

The chamber in which Linton now stood was smaller than the outer one, and equally shaded from the strong sunlight. His eyes were now, however, accustomed to the dusky half-light, and he was able to mark the costly furniture and splendid ornaments of the room. The walls were hung with rose-coloured damask, over which a drapery of white lace was suspended, looped up at intervals to admit of small brackets of bronze, on which stood either "statuettes" or vases of rare "Sèvres." At a toilet-table in the middle of the room were laid out the articles of a lady's dressing-case, but of such costly splendour that they seemed too gorgeous for use. Trinkets and jewellery of great value were scattered carelessly over the table, and an immense diamond cross glittered from the mother-o'-pearl frame of the looking-glass.

The half-open curtains at the end of the room showed a marble bath, into which the water flowed from a little cascade of imitation rustic, its tiny ripple murmuring in the still silence of the room. There was another sound, still softer and more musical than that, there—the long-drawn breathing of a young girl, who, with her face upon her arm, lay asleep upon a sofa. With stealthy step and noiseless gesture, Linton approached and stood beside her. He was not one to be carried away by any enthusiasm of admiration, and yet he could not look upon the faultless symmetry of that form, the placid

beauty of that face, on which a passing dream had left a lingering smile, and not feel deeply moved. In her speaking moments, her dark and flashing eyes often lent a character of haughty severity to her handsome features; now, their dark lashes shrouded them, and the expression of the face was angelic in sweetness. The olive-darkness of her skin, too, was tempered by the half-light, while the slight tinge of colour on her cheek might have vied with the petal of a rose. Linton drew a chair beside the sofa, and sat down. With folded arms, and head slightly bent forward, he watched her, while his fast-hurrying thoughts travelled miles and miles — speculating, planning, contriving—meeting difficulties here—grasping advantages there —playing over a game of life, and thinking if an adversary could find a flaw in it.

"She is worthy to be a Duchess," said he, as he gazed at her. "A Duchess!—and what more?—that is the question. Ah, these women, these women! if they but knew their power! If they but knew how all the boldest strivings of our intellects are as nothing compared to what their beauty can effect! Well, well; it is better that they should not. They are tyrants, even as it is—petty tyrants—to all who care for them; and he who does not is their master. *That* is the real power—there the stronghold—and how they fear the man who takes his stand behind it!—how they crouch and tremble before him!—what fascinating graces do they reserve for *him*, that they would not bestow upon a lover! Is it that they only love where they fear? How beautiful she looks, and how calmly sweet!—it is the sleeping tigress, notwithstanding. And now to awake her: it is a pity, too; that wearied mind wants repose, and the future gives but little promise of it."

He bent down over her, till he almost touched the silken masses of her long dark hair, and, in a low, soft voice, said:

"Maritaña—Maritaña."

"No, no, no," said she, in the low, muttering accents of sleep, "not here —not here!"

"And why not here, dearest?" said he, catching at the words.

A faint shudder passed over her, and she gathered her shawl more closely around her.

"Hace mal tiempo—the weather looks gloomy,"—said she, in a faint voice.

"And if not here, Maritaña, where then?" said he, in a low tone.

"In our own deep forests, beneath the liana and the cedar; where the mimosa blossoms, and the acacia scents the air; where fountains are springing, and the glow-worm shines like a star in the dark grass. Oh, not here not here!" cried she, plaintively.

"Then in Italy, Maritaña mia, where all that the tropics can boast is blended with whatever is beautiful in art; where genius goes hand-in-hand with nature; and where life floats calmly on, like some smooth-flowing river, unruffled and unbroken."

A faint low sigh escaped her, and her lips parted with a smile of surpassing loveliness.

"Yes, dearest—there, with me, beside the blue waters of the Adriatic, or lost amid the chesnut forests of the Apennines. Think of those glorious cities too, where the once great still live, enshrined by memory, in their own palace walls. Think of Venice——"

The word was not well uttered when, with a shrill scream, she started up and awoke.

"Who spoke to me of my shame? Who spoke of Venice?" cried she, in accents of wild terror.

"Be calm, Maritaña. It was a dream—nothing but a dream," said Linton, pressing her gently down again. "Do not think more of it."

"Where am I?" said she, drawing a long breath.

"In your own dressing-room, dearest," said he, in an accent of deep devotion.

"And you, Sir? Why are *you* here? and by what right do you address me thus?"

"By no right," said Linton, with a submissive deference which well became him. "I can plead nothing, save the devotion of a heart long since your own, and the good wishes of your father, Maritaña, who bade me speak to you."

"I will not believe it, Sir," said she, proudly, as she arose and walked the room with stately step. "I know but too well the influence you wield over him, although I cannot tell how it is acquired. I have seen your counsels sway, and your wishes guide him, when my entreaties were unheard and unheeded. Tell me nothing, then, of his permission."

"Let me speak of that better reason, where my heart may plead, Maritaña. It was to offer you a share in my fortunes that I have come here—to place at your feet whatever I possess in rank, in station, and in future hope—to place you where your beauty and your fascinations entitle you to shine—a Peeress of the Court of France—a Duchess, of a name only second to Royalty itself."

The girl's dark eyes grew darker, and her flushed cheek grew crimson, as with heaving bosom she listened. "A Duchess!" murmured she, between her lips.

"La Ducaesse de Marlier," repeated Linton, slowly, while his keen eyes were riveted on her.

"And this real—not a pageant — not as that thing you made of me before?"

"La Duchesse de Marlier," said Linton again, "knows of no rank above her own, save in the Blood Royal. Her château was the present of a king —her grounds are worthy of such a donor."

"And the Duke de Marlier," said she, with a look of ineffable irony, "who is to play *him?* Is that part reserved for Mr. Linton?"

"Could he not look the character?" said Linton, putting on a smile of seeming good-humour, while his lip trembled with passion.

"Look it—ay, that could he; and if looks would suffice, he could be all that his ambition aims at."

"You doubt my sincerity, Maritaña," said he, sorrowfully; "have I ever given you cause to do so?"

"Never," cried she, impetuously. "I read you from the first hour I saw you. You never deceived *me*. *My* training has not been like that of others of my sex and age, amidst the good, the virtuous, and the pure. It was the corrupt, the base-born, and the abandoned offered their examples to my eyes: the ruined gambler, the beggared adventurer—*their* lives were my daily study. How, then, should I not recognise one so worthy of them all?"

"This is less than fair, Maritaña; you bear me a grudge for having counselled that career wherein your triumphs were unbounded; and now you speak to me harshly for offering a station a princess might accept without a derogation."

"Tell me not of my trinmphs," said she, passionately; "they were my shame! You corrupted me, by trifling with my ignorance of the world. I did not know then, as now I know, what were the prizes of that ambition I cherished! But *you* knew them; *you* speculated on them, as now you speculate upon others. Ay, blush for it; let your cheek glow, and sear your cold heart for the infamy! The coroneted Duchess would have been a costlier merchandise than the wreathed dancer! Oh, shame upon you!—shame upon you! Could you not be satisfied with your gambler's cruelty, and ruin those who have manhood's courage to sustain defeat, but that you should make your victim a poor, weak, motherless girl, whose unprotected life might have evoked even *your* pity?"

"I will supplicate no longer; upon you be it, if the alternative be heavy. Hear me, young lady. It is by your father's consent—nay, more, at his desire,—that I make you the proffer of my name and rank. He is in my power,—not his fortune, nor his future prospects, but his very life is in my hands. You shudder at having been a dancer: think of what you may be—the daughter of a forçat, a galley-slave! If these be idle threats, ask him.

self; he will tell you if I speak truly. It is my ambition that you should share my title and my fortune. I mean to make your position one that the proudest would envy; reject my offer if you will, but never reproach me with what your own blind folly has accomplished."

Maritaña stood with clasped hands, and eyes wildly staring on vacancy, as Linton, in a voice broken with passion, uttered these words:

"I will not press you, now, Maritaña; you shall have to-night to think over all I have said; to-morrow you will give me your answer."

"To-morrow?" muttered she, after him.

"Who is there?" said Linton, as a low, faint knock was heard at the door. It was repeated, and Linton approached and opened the door. A slight gesture of the hand was all that he could perceive in the half-light; but he understood it, and passed out, closing the door noiselessly behind him.

"Well?" said Rica, as he grasped the other's arm; "well?"

"Well?" echoed Linton, peevishly. "She is in her most insolent of moods, and affects to think that all the splendour I have offered her is but the twin of the mock magnificence of the stage. She is a fool, but she'll think better of it, or she must be taught to do so."

Rica sighed heavily, but made no answer; at last he said,

"It is over with the Duke, and he bears it well."

"Good blood always does," said Linton. "Your men of birth have a lively sense of how little they have done for their estates, and therefore part with them with a proportionate degree of indifference. Where is he?"

"Writing letters in the boudoir off the drawing-room. You must see him, and ask when the necessary papers can be signed and exchanged."

Linton walked on, and passing through the play-room, around which in every attitude of slumber the gamblers lay, entered the boudoir, before a table in which the Duke de Marsac was busy writing.

"Fortune has still been obdurate, my Lord Duke, I hear," said he, entering softly.

The Duke looked up, and his pale features were totally devoid of all emotion as he said,

"I have lost heavily, Sir."

"I am sincerely grieved to hear it; as an old sufferer in the same field, I can feel for others." A very slight movement of impatience on the Duke's part showed that he regarded the sympathy as obtrusive. Linton saw this and went on: "I would not have invaded your privacy to say as much, my Lord Duke, but I thought it might be satisfactory to you to learn that your ancient dukedom—the château of your proud ancestors—is not destined to

fall into plebeian hands, nor suffer the indignity of their profanation. I mean to purchase the property from Rica myself."

"Indeed!" said the Duke, carelessly, as though the announcement had no interest for him.

"I had fancied, my Lord, this information would have given you pleasure," said Linton, with evident irritation of manner.

"No, Sir," said the other languidly, "I am ashamed to say I cannot appreciate the value of these tidings."

"Can the contract and transfer be speedily made out?" said Linton, abruptly.

"Of course; there shall be no delay in the matter. I will give orders to my 'Notaire' at once."

"And where shall you be found to-morrow, my Lord Duke, in case we desire to confer with you?"

The Duke grew lividly pale, and he arose slowly from his chair, and, taking Linton's arm, drew him towards a window in silence. Linton saw well that some new train of thought had suddenly sprung up, and wondered what could so instantaneously have wrought this change in his manner.

"You ask me, Sir," said the Duke, with a slow emphasis on every word, "where am I to be found to-morrow? Is not Mr. Linton's knowledge of Paris sufficient to suggest the answer to that question?" There was a fierce boldness in the way these words were uttered Linton could not comprehend, any more than he understood what they might mean.

"I must plead ignorance, my Lord Duke. I really discredit the eulogium you have pronounced upon my information."

"Then I will tell you, Sir," said the Duke, speaking in a low thick whisper, while his dark eyes glared with the fire of intense excitement. "You will find me in the SEINE!"

Linton staggered back as if he had been struck, and a pallor spread over his features, making the very lips bloodless. "How do you mean, Sir? Why do you dare to say this to *me?*" said he, in a voice broken and guttural.

"Since none should better know how to appreciate the news," was the cold answer.

Linton trembled from head to foot, and, casting a wary look around on every side to see that they were alone, he said, "These words may mean much, or they may mean nothing—at least nothing that has concern for me. Now, Sir, be explicit: in what sense am I to read them?"

The Duke looked astonished at the emotion which all the other's self-command could not repress; he saw, too, that he had touched a secret spring of conscience, and with a calm reserve he said, "Take what I have said in

the sense your own heart now suggests, and I venture to affirm it will be the least pleasing interpretation you can put upon it!"

"You shall give me satisfaction for this, Sir," said Linton, whose passion now boiled over. "I will not endure the tyranny of insinuations from any man. Here, before you quit the house—if ever you quit it—I will have full satisfaction for your insolence."

"Insolence!" cried the Duke.

"Yes, insolence. I repeat the word, and these gentlemen shall hear a still stronger word addressed to you, if that will not suffice to arouse your courage."

This speech was now directed to the crowd of gamblers, who, suddenly awakened by the loud talking, rushed in a body into the room.

Questions, and demands for explanation, pressed on every hand, their countrymen gathering round the antagonists on either side, both of whom maintained for some minutes a perfect silence. The Duke was the first to speak. "Gentlemen," said he, "you have heard an expression addressed to me which no Frenchman listens to without inflicting chastisement on the speaker—I do not ask—I do not care in the least—who this person may be—what his rank and position in life; I am ready to admit him to the fullest equality with myself. It only remains that I should satisfy myself of certain doubts, which his own manner has originated. It may be that he cannot call *me*, or any other gentleman, to account for his words."

Linton's face twitched with short convulsive jerks as he listened, and then, crossing the room to where the Duke stood, he struck him with his glove across the face, while, with a very shout of passion, he uttered the one word—"Coward!" The scene became now one of the wildest confusion. The partisanship of country surrounded either with a group, who in loud tones expressed their opinions, and asked for explanations of what had occurred. That some gross insult had been put upon Linton was the prevailing impression; but how originating, or of what nature, none knew, nor did the principals seem disposed to afford the information.

"I tell you, Frobisher," said Linton, angrily, "it is a matter does not admit of explanation."

"Parbleu, Sir! you have placed it out of the reach of such," said an old French officer, "and I trust you will feel the consequences."

The chaos of tongues, loud in altercation and dispute, now burst forth again, some asserting that the cause of quarrel should be openly declared at once, others averring that the opprobrious epithet applied by Linton to the Duke effectually debarred negotiation, and left no other arbitrament than the pistol. In the midst of this tumult, where angry passions were already enlisted, and insolent rejoinders passed from mouth to mouth, a still louder

uproar was now heard in the direction of the *salon*, and the crash of a breaking door, and the splintering noise of the shattered wood, overtopped the other sounds.

"The Commissaire de Police!" cried some one, and the words were electric. The hours of play were illegal—the habits of the house such as to implicate all in charges, more or less disgraceful—and immediately a general rush was made for escape—some seeking the well-known private issues from the apartment, others preparing for a bold attempt to force their passage through the armed followers of the Commissary.

Every avenue of escape had been already occupied by the gendarmes; and the discomfited gamblers were seen returning into the room crestfallen and ashamed, when the Commissary, followed by a knot of others in plain clothes, advancing into the middle of the chamber, pronounced the legal form of arrest on all present.

"I am a Peer of France," said the Duke de Marsac, haughtily. "I yield to no authority that does not carry the signature of my Sovereign."

"You are free, Monsieur le Duc," said the Commissary, bowing respectfully.

"I am an English gentleman," said Linton, stepping forward. "I demand by what right you presume to detain me in custody?"

"What is your name, Sir?" asked the Commissary.

"Linton!" was the brief reply.

"That's the man," whispered a voice from behind the Commissary, and, at the same instant, that functionary approached, and laying his hand on the other's shoulder, said:

"I arrest you, Sir, on the charge of murder."

"Murder!" repeated Linton, with a sneer that he could not merge into a laugh. "This is a sorry jest, Sir."

"You will find it sad earnest!" said a deep voice.

Linton turned round, and straight in front of him stood Roland Cashel, who, with bent brows and compressed lips, seemed struggling to repress the passion that worked within him.

"I say, Frobisher, are you omitted in the indictment?" cried Linton, with a sickly attempt to laugh; "or has our buccaneering friend forgotten to stigmatise *you* for the folly of having known him?"

"He is in *my* custody," said a gruff English voice, in reply to some observation of the Commissary; and a short, stout-built man made a gesture to another in the crowd to advance.

"What! is this indignity to be put upon me?" said Linton, as he saw the handcuffs produced, and prepared to be adjusted to his wrists. "Is the

false accusation of a pirate and a slaver to expose me to the treatment of a convicted felon?"

"I will do my duty, Sir," said the police officer, steadily. "If I do more, my superiors can hear of it. Tom, put on the irons."

"Is this your vengeance, Sir?" said Linton, as he cast a look of ineffable hate towards Cashel; but Roland made no reply, as he stood regarding the scene with an air of saddest meaning.

"You knew him better than I did, Charley," said Linton, sneeringly, "when you black-balled him at the Yacht Club; but the world shall know him better yet than either of us—mean-spirited scoundrel that he is"

"Come away, Sir," said the officer, as he placed himself on one side of his prisoner, his fellow doing the same at the other.

"Not till I see your warrant," said Linton, resolutely.

"There it is, Sir, all reg'lar," said the man; "signed by the Secretary of State, and attested by the witness."

"The rascality is well got up," said Linton, trying to laugh, "but by Heaven they shall pay for it!" These words were directed to where Roland stood, and uttered with a concentrated hate that thrilled through every heart around.

As Linton was led forth, the Commissary proceeded to arrest the different individuals present on the charge of gambling in secret. In the midst of the group was Rica, standing pale with terror, and overcome by the revelations he had listened to.

"I will be responsible for this gentleman's appearance," said Cashel, addressing the Commissary. "There is no need to subject him to the insult of an arrest."

"He can only be liberated by a bail bond in presence of the Judge, Sir. You can accompany me to the Court, and enter into the recognisances, if you will."

"Be it so," said Cashel, bowing.

Rica made a sign for Roland to approach him. He tried to speak, but his voice was inarticulate from faintness, and the only audible sound was the one word "Maritaña."

"Where?" said Cashel, eagerly.

Rica nodded in the direction of a small door that led from the chamber, and Cashel made a gesture of assent in answer.

With headlong speed Roland traversed the corridor, and entered the ante-chamber at the end of it. One glance showed him that the room was empty, and he passed on into the chamber where so lately Linton had spoken with Maritaña. This, too, was deserted, as was the bedroom which

opened into it. Hastening from place to place, he called her name aloud, but no answer came. Terrified by a hundred fears, for he well knew the rash, impetuous nature of the girl, Roland entreated, in tones of wildest passion, "that she might come forth—that her friends were all around her, and nothing more to fear." But no voice replied, and when the sound of his own died away, all was silent. The window of the dressing-room was open, and as Roland looked from it into the street beneath, his eye caught the fragment of a dress adhering to the hook of the "jalousie." It was plain now she had made her escape in this manner, and that she was gone.

Too true! Overcome by terror—her mind distracted by fears of Linton —without one to succour or protect her, she had yielded to the impulse of her dread, and leaped from the window! That small rag of fluttering gauze was all that remained of Maritaña.

Rica was to hear these sad tidings as he was led away by the Commissary, but he listened to them like one whose mind was stunned by calamity. A few low murmuring words alone escaped him, and they indicated that he felt everything which was happening as a judgment upon him for his own crimes.

Even in his examination before the judge, these half-uttered self-accusings broke forth, and he seemed utterly indifferent as to what fate awaited him. By Cashel's intervention, and the deposit of a large sum as bail for Rica's future appearance, his liberation was effected, and he was led away from the spot unconscious of all around him.

As Cashel assisted the weak and tottering man through the crowded passages of the court, he felt his arm gently touched by a hand, at the same instant that his name was uttered. He turned hastily, and saw at his side a woman, who, youthful and still handsome, bore in her appearance the signs of deep poverty and still deeper sorrow. Her dress had once been rich, but now, from time and neglect, was disfigured and shabby; her veil, partly drawn across her face, was torn and ragged, and her very shoes were in tatters. A more sad-looking object it were difficult to conceive, and in the hurried glance Roland bestowed upon her, at a moment when all his thoughts were intent upon other cares, he believed that she was one entreating charity. Hastily drawing forth his purse, he offered her some money, but she drew proudly up, saying, "This is insult, Sir, and I have not deserved it."

Cashel started with amazement, and drawing closer, stared eagerly at her.

"Great Heaven!" cried he, "is this possible? Is this——"

"Hush!" cried she. "Let me not hear my name—or what was once

my name—spoken aloud. I see now—you did not know me, nor would I have brought myself to the shame of being recognised but for *his* sake. *He* is now before the tribunal, and will be sent to prison for want of bail."

Cashel motioned to her not to leave the spot; and having safely placed Rica in his carriage, returned to the court.

By the guarantee of his name, and the offer of any moneyed security which might be required, Cashel obtained permission for Lord Charles Frobisher to go free; and then hurrying outside, communicated the tidings to her who stood trembling with fear and anxiety.

With tearful eyes, and in a voice broken by sobs, she was uttering her thanks as Lord Charles joined them.

"This, then, was *your* doing?" said he, staring coldly at her.

"Say, rather, it was your own, my Lord," said Cashel, sternly.

"Oh, Charles! thank him—thank him," cried she, hysterically. "Friends have not been so plenty with us, that we can treat them thus!"

"Lady Charles is most grateful, Sir," said Frobisher, with a cold sneer, "I am sure the show of feeling she evinces must repay all your generosity." And, with this base speech, he drew her arm within his, and moved hastily away. One look towards Cashel, as she turned to go, told more forcibly than words the agony of her broken heart.

And this was the once gay, light-hearted girl—the wild and daring romp, whose buoyant spirit seemed above every reverse of fortune. Poor Jemima Meek! she had run away from her father's home to link her lot with a gambler! Some play transaction, in which his name was involved, compelled him to quit the service, and at last the country. Now, depending for support upon his family, now, hazarding his miserable means at play, he had lived a life of recklessness and privation—nothing left to him of his former condition, save the name that he had brought down to infamy!

## CHAPTER LXXII.

### ALL MYSTERY CEASES—MARRIAGE AND GENERAL JOY.

"The end of all."

WHAT a contrast did Roland Cashel's life now present to the purposeless vacuity of his late existence! Every hour was occupied; even to a late period of each night was he engaged by cares which seemed to thicken around him as he advanced.

We should but weary our reader were we to follow him in the ceaseless round of duties which hard necessity imposed. Each morning his first visit was to the hospital of St. Louis, where Keane still lay, weakly struggling against a malady whose fatal termination was beyond a doubt; and although Roland could not wish for the prolongation of a life which the law would demand in expiation, he felt a craving desire that the testimony of the dying man should be full and explicit on every point, and that every dubious circumstance should be explained ere the grave closed over him.

To seek for Maritaña, to endeavour to recover this poor forlorn girl, was his next care, and to this end he spared nothing. Whatever money could purchase, or skill and unwearied enterprise suggest, were all employed in the search. Rica, whose nature seemed totally changed by the terrible shock of Linton's culpability, gave himself up implicitly to Cashel's guidance, and was unceasing in his efforts to discover his missing child. But with all the practised acuteness of the police at their command, and all the endeavours which their zeal could practise, the search was fruitless, and not a trace of her could be detected.

Through the Neapolitan Embassy, orders were transmitted to Naples to inquire into the case of Enrique, whose innocence the testimony of Keane went far to establish. The result was, as Cashel ardently hoped, his complete vindication, and a telegraphic despatch brought tidings that he was already liberated, and on his way to Paris. While both Roland and Rica waited impatiently for the arrival of one whose assistance in their search would be so valuable, the most perfect good understanding grew up between them, and Cashel began to perceive how, beneath the vices which a life of reckless debauchery had created, there lay—inactive and unused for many a day—kindly feelings and warm affections for which he had never given him

credit. As this confidence grew stronger, Rica became more frank and open in all his intercourse, and at last revealed to Cashel the whole story of his life—a strange, eventful history, whose vicissitudes were the changing fortunes of a gambler's existence. For such was he—without a passion, a pursuit of any kind but play, he had passed his life in that one baneful vice. For it he had toiled and laboured: to indulge that passion he had engaged in deadly duels, and perilled his life by acts of forgery.

His marriage with Corrigan's daughter was brought about solely to procure the means of play; nor was there an energy of his mind or an impulse of his nature had any other direction. Linton's skill as a gambler—the unceasing resources he seemed to possess—the stratagems and devices he could deploy—created for him, in Rica's mind, a species of admiration that soon degenerated into a blind submission to all his dictates. Such an ally as this, so deeply versed in all the weak points of his fellow-men—so thoroughly master of every impulse that moves—of every hope and fear that sways the gambler's nature—had been the cherished desire of his heart for many a year, and now Fortune had at last given him such an associate. Their sudden success seemed to warrant the justice of the hope. Everything prospered with them since their new league. If he did not gain an equal ascendancy over the daughter's mind as he had acquired over the father's, still the ambitious future he often pictured before her dazzled and delighted her, and thus, ere long, he contrived to obtain a degree of power, although of different kinds, over both. From such an associate as Linton concealment was impossible; and Rica soon saw himself completely at the mercy of a man who had sifted every motive of his heart, and weighed every action of his life, and at last became his pitiless, tyrannical master.

Rica's connexion with Corrigan suggested to Linton's inventive mind the possibility of succeeding to that estate for which already he had perilled so much. His plan was to obtain from Corrigan a full renunciation of his claim to the property, and then to take the necessary steps to investigate the long dormant title. All their efforts to discover the old man's residence were, however, vain; for although they once obtained a clue to the fact, some information seemed to have apprised the others of their danger, and their abode was immediately changed.

It was with a strange thrill of mingled pain and pleasure Cashel heard Rica speak of his daughter Mary—of her he had deserted for so many a year, and yet now yearned towards with an affection that sprang from his self-accusings. The terrible chastisement his own vices had inflicted on his lonely and deserted lot seemed never absent from his thoughts; and he would sit for hours silently, while the heavy tears rolled along his furrowed cheeks, and his strong, heaving bosom showed his agony.

The fruitlessness of their search after Maritaña in Paris, and the death of Tom Keane in the hospital, removed the only obstacles to their departure from that city; and Rica and Cashel, who now felt their fortunes bound up together, prepared to take their leave of Paris. The trial of Linton was to take place in Limerick, and thither Roland was summoned by the law officers of the Crown. This sad duty accomplished, he was to accompany Rica to Columbia, whither some slight hope of recovering Maritaña induced him to proceed. As for Cashel, once in the old haunts of childhood, he had resolved never to quit them more.

Roland's arrangements for departure were soon made, and he repaired to the Embassy, where he had been invited to breakfast on the last morning of his stay. There was a certain bustle and movement in the court-yard which attracted his attention; and he saw two travelling-carriages, with an attendant "fourgon," surrounded by servants, and loaded with all the preparations for a long journey.

"You have come in time, Mr. Cashel," said the Ambassador, as he shook hands with him, "to see our new Minister at Florence, who is now on his way thither; and what will have more interest in your eyes, a very pretty girl, who has become the great literary character of our circles here. I regret much that she is about to leave us."

Cashel bowed politely, but with the cold indifference of one for whom the tidings had no peculiar interest, and accompanied the Ambassador into a *salon*, crowded with company.

"I have a young countryman to present to you, my Lord," said his Excellency, leading Cashel forward, "who I trust will wear a less sombre face in the sunny south than he has done in our northern latitudes. Mr. Roland Cashel—Lord Kilgoff."

A sudden start of surprise was made by both, and Roland stood mute and thunderstruck as Lord Kilgoff advanced towards him with extended hand, and said:

"Yes, Mr. Cashel, your old friend in better health and spirits than when last you saw him; and better able to thank you for much hospitality, and apologise for much injustice."

"Let me have my share in both acknowledgments," said Lady Kilgoff, rising, and taking Cashel's hand with much cordiality.

Roland tried to mutter a few words, but he could not succeed; and his eyes ranged about the chamber till they fell upon one who, pale and motionless, regarded him with a look of most expressive sadness.

"Miss Leicester, too, here?" said he, at last.

"Yes, Mr. Cashel," said Lady Kilgoff; "chance is about to do for us, what all our skill would have failed in. Here are two worthy people who

will not hear you name mentioned, and who now must consent, not alone to hear, but see you in person. I am quite convinced you never did or could have injured them. Stand forward, Mr. Corrigan, and make your charge."

"I will save that gentleman the pain of accusing me," said Roland, with deep emotion. "I have injured him deeply, but yet unwittingly. I have long desired this meeting, to place in his hands a document I have never ceased to carry about me—the title to a property of which I was not the rightful owner, and which is his—and his only."

"I will not, I cannot accept of it, Sir," said Corrigan, proudly. "I will never see that cottage more."

"I do not speak of 'the Cottage,'" said Cashel, "but of the whole estate of Tubbermore, the ancient possession of your house—still yours. There is the proof." And, as he spoke, he drew forth the pardon, and handed it to Corrigan.

The old man trembled in every limb as he perused the paper, which he now read over for the third time.

"A royal pardon to Miles Corrigan, my grandfather?" exclaimed he, gasping for breath; "and how came you by this, Sir?"

"The story is soon told," said Cashel, relating in a few words the singular steps of the discovery.

"And you have travelled throughout Europe for upwards of three years to disencumber yourself of 16,000*l.* a year?" said the Ambassador, smiling good-naturedly.

"I have done so to disencumber myself of the weight of an injustice."

"And this is the youth you would accuse of deception?" said Lady Kilgoff, haughtily.

"Forgive me, lady; forgive one who has suffered too heavily from the world not to fall into the error of thinking once unjustly of a benefactor."

"I have no title to the name, Sir," said Cashel. "Nay, more. I am your debtor for wealth which I squandered, believing it my own."

"I knew him better than any of you," cried old Doctor Tiernay, rushing forward and grasping Cashel by both hands. "My own generous, high-hearted boy. Come here, Mary; tell him candidly that you, too, were always of my opinion. This is no time for coyness. Let us have a little honesty after all this deception." He drew Cashel to one side, and, in a deep whisper, said, "What of that Spanish girl?—Are you married or not?"

Roland smiled at the eagerness of the old man's manner, and, in half-sadness, said, "Poor Maritaña is now a fugitive—we know not where."

A sudden commotion at the door, and a tumult of voices, interrupted the scene, and Rica rushed in, crying in ecstasy, "She is found—my child is found!"

The travellers of the diligence passing through the wood of Versailles had discovered the form of a sleeping girl at the foot of a tree, and carried her back with them to Paris. Enrique himself, being among them, recognised her at once, and soon succeeded in finding out Rica, into whose arms he restored her.

While Rica hurriedly poured forth this explanation, old Corrigan stood tremulous with agitation, and at last, advancing towards him, said, "Leicester, I am no longer afraid to meet you. Fortune has, at last, favoured me. I am rich now, and can make you rich also."

Rica started back: a sudden sickness came over him, and he fell powerless at the old man's feet.

What a scene of heartfelt emotion followed, as Mary recognised her long lost father; and the careworn, sorrow-struck man saw the warm affections of those whom, in a lifelong, he had injured.

"The end of all this will be," said Lady Kilgoff, laughing through tears, "that I shall have to proceed on my journey alone. I foresee that we shall not share in all the general joy of these discoveries."

"I have a sister, too," exclaimed Mary, with enthusiasm, "whom I am burning with impatience to see. Where is she? when are we to meet?"

"She is below—she is in my carriage at the door," said Rica.

The Ambassador heard the words and left the room, returning in a moment with Maritaña on his arm. Wearied and exhausted as she was, there was that in her native grace and beauty that caused a thrill of admiration as she entered.

"Here is your sister, Maritaña," said Rica, leading her to where Mary stood, gazing with wistful eyes at the Spanish beauty. Maritaña looked steadily at the fair loveliness before her, where timidity and gentleness seemed impressed; and then, as if yielding to some sudden impulse, she sprang forward, and, clasping her hand, covered it with kisses, exclaiming with rapture—

"Non! non la sua hermana, ma la sua esclava!—Not her sister, but her slave."

Among the group who with admiring eyes gazed upon this little scene, there stood a dark, sombre-looking man, whose mean attire and travel-worn look could not conceal a certain dignity of air and manner. Cashel's quick glance soon discovered him, and in a moment they were locked in a fast embrace. "My old, true-hearted comrade!" cried Roland.

"Yes, Señora!" said Maritaña, as if answering the look of astonishment of Mary; "and for all that he seems now, he is a well-born caballero, and noble to boot."

"Everything looks worse and worse for my prospects of companionship,"

said Lady Kilgoff, poutingly. "Mr. Corrigan—Mary—are you both bent on desertion?"

"We are bound for Ireland, fair lady; the little remnant of my life is a debt I owe my country."

"Señor Rica and your lovely daughter, will you be our companions?"

"Our road lies westward, lady. The New World must teach us to forget the Old one."

"Mr. Cashel, am I to guess whither your steps will lead you?"

"It would save me the pain of deciding if you did," said Roland, sadly.

"You come with us, Roland," said Mr. Corrigan; "you once told me that you felt Tubber-beg a home. Let us see if time has not erased the impression."

"And Maritaña, too!" cried Mary.

"And Enrique!" said Maritaña.

"Then I must be of the party," said Dr. Tiernay. "I was never intended by nature for an embassy physician, but as a village doctor I still feel that I shall hold up my head with dignity."

Rica, who meanwhile was in earnest conversation with Cashel, now advanced into the middle of the group, and said,—"Mr. Cashel once contracted a solemn pledge to me, from which I feel no inclination to release him. I ask him before this assemblage if it be true he promised to marry my daughter?"

Roland grew deadly pale, but in a faint voice replied, "It is true."

"Are you willing to keep your pledge?" said Rica, firmly.

Cashel made no answer but a slight motion of the head.

"Then she is yours," said Rica, placing Mary Leicester's hand in his. While Maritaña, in a transport of feeling, fell into her father's arms, and sobbed aloud.

"Then we are all bound once for Ireland," cried Mr. Corrigan; "and I trust never to leave it more."

"I will not promise," said Cashel, as he drew Mary closer to him. "The memories I bear of the land are not all painless."

"But you have seen nothing of Ireland that was Irish!" exclaimed Tiernay, boldly. "You saw a mongrel society made up of English adventurers, who, barren of hope at home, came to dazzle with their fashionable vices the cordial homeliness of our humbler land. You saw the poor pageantry of a mock court, and the frivolous pretension of a tinsel rank. You saw the emptiness of pretended statesmanship, and the assumed superiority of a class whose ignorance was only veiled by their insolence. But of hearty, generous, hospitable Ireland—of the land of warm impulses and

kindly affections—you saw nothing. That is a country yet to be explored by you; nor are its mysteries the less likely to be unravelled, that an Irish wife will be your guide to them. And now to breakfast, for I am famishing."

Where the characters of a tale bear a share in influencing its catastrophe, the reader seems to have a prescriptive right to learn something of their ultimate destiny, even though the parts they played were merely subordinate. Many of ours here cannot lay claim to such an interest, and were seen but like the phantoms which a magic lantern throws upon the wall—moving and grouping for a moment, and then lost for ever.

It is from no want of respect to our reader, if we trace not the current of such lives; it is simply from the fact, that when they ceased to act, they ceased, as it were, to exist. Are we not, all of us in the world, acted upon and influenced by events and people—purely passers-by, known to-day, seen perhaps for a week, or known for a month, and yet never after met with in all life's journey? As on a voyage many a casual air of wind, many a wayward breeze helps us onward, and yet none inquire "whence it cometh or whither it goeth,"—so is it in the real world; and why not in the world of fiction, which ought to be its counterpart?

Of those in whom our interest centred, the reader knows all that we know ourselves. Would he, or rather she, care to learn that the elder Miss Kennyfeck never married, but became a companion to Lady Janet, who, on the death of Sir Andrew, caused by his swallowing a liniment, and taking into his stomach what was meant for his skin, went abroad, and is still a well-known character in the watering-places of Germany, where she and her friend are the terror of all who tremble at evil-speaking and slandering?

Olivia married the Reverend Knox Softly, and seems as meek as a curate's wife ought to be, nor bears a trace of those days when she smiled on cornets or mingled sighs with captains of hussars. If some of our characters have fared ill in this adventurous history, others have been more fortunate. The Dean is made a Colonial Bishop, and the distinguished Mr. Howle's picture occupies a place in the last Exhibition!

Meek is still a placeman: bland, gentle, and conciliating as ever, he made at the close of the session a most affecting speech upon the sorrows of Ireland, and drew tears from the ventilator at his picture of her destitution!

Mrs. Kennyfeck and "Aunt Fanny" keep house together in the ancient city of Galway. Attracted to each other by a thousand antipathies, more cohesive than any friendship, they fight and quarrel unceasingly, and are never known to agree, save when the enthusiasm of their malevolence has discovered a common victim in the circle of their "friends."

Here ends our history; nor need we linger longer with those whose happiness, so far as worldly prosperity can make it, is at last secured.

There is but one destiny of which we have to speak. Linton was never brought to trial; the day after his landing in England he was found dead in the cell of his prison—no trace of violence, nor any evidence of poison to account for the circumstance; and whether through some agency of his own or by the workings of a broken heart, the fact remains a mystery.

THE END.

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